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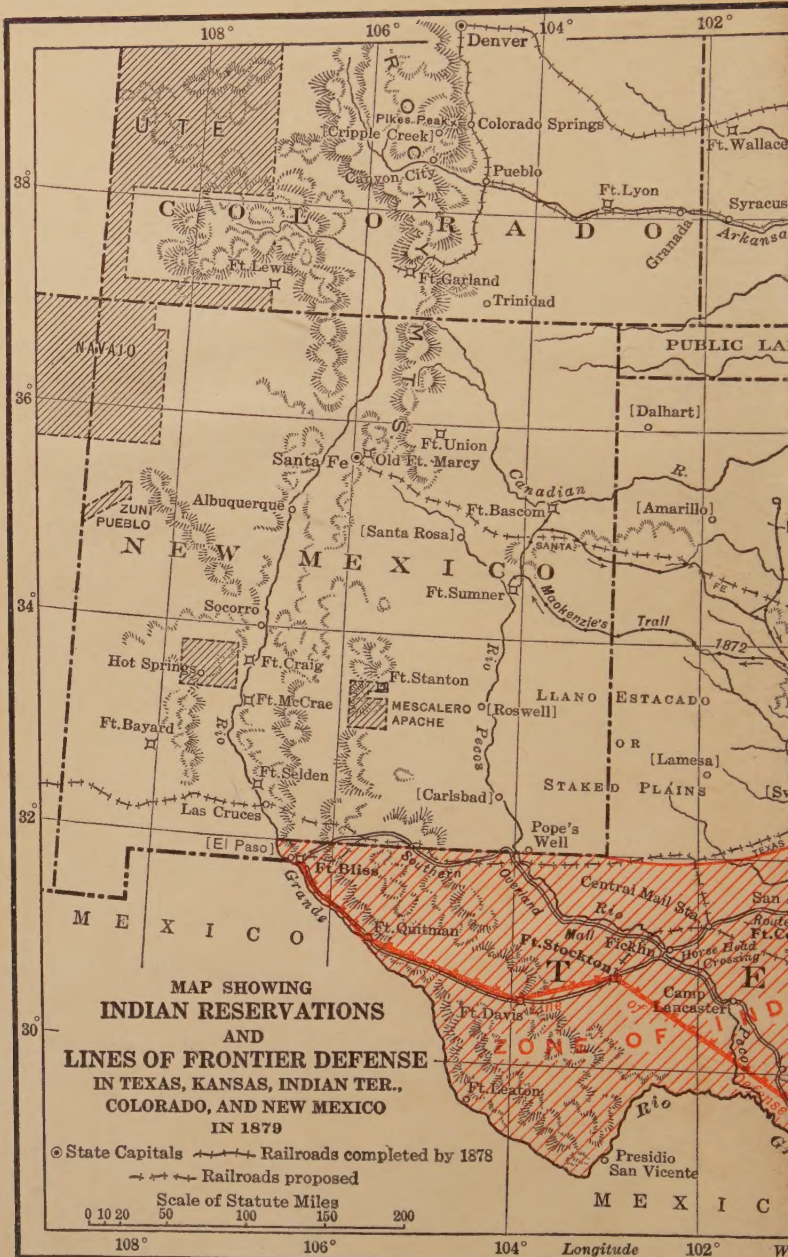


## The Southwestern Frontier

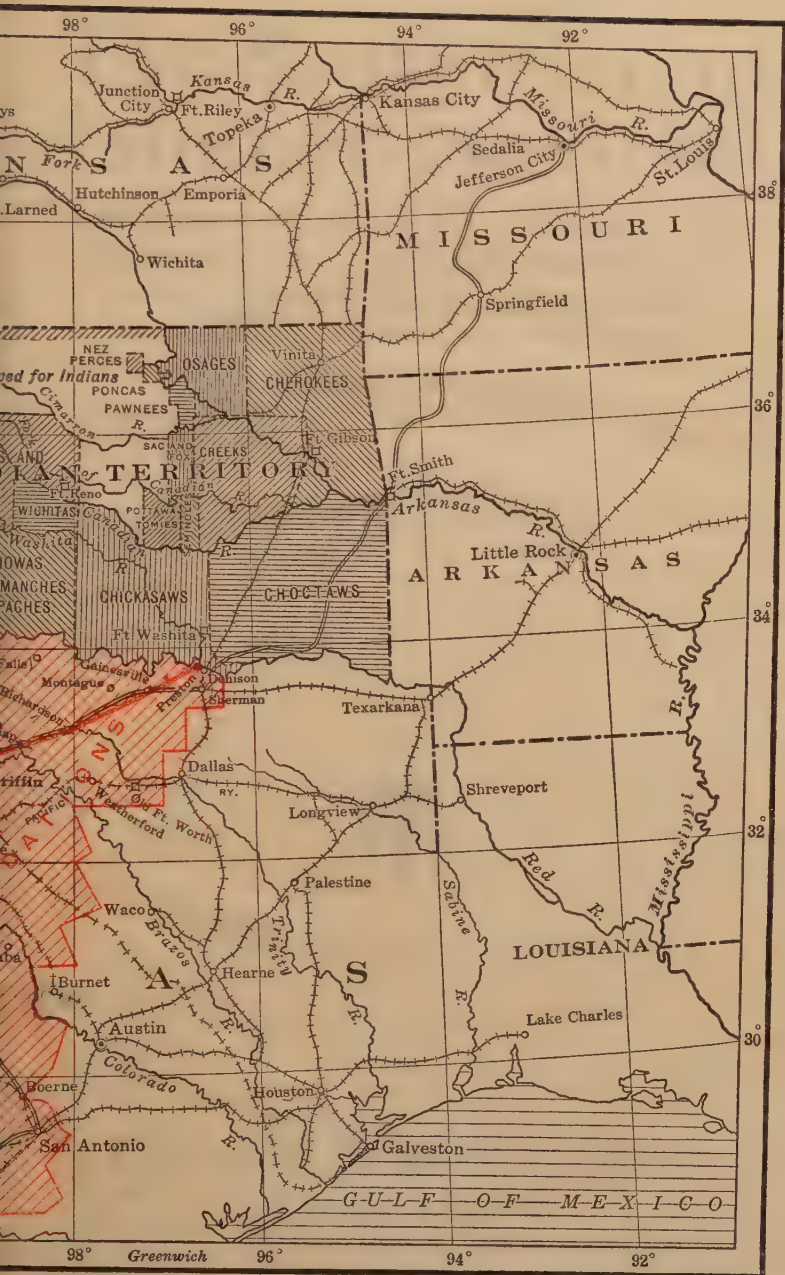














# The Southwestern Frontier-1865-1881

A History of the Coming of the Settlers, Indian  
Depredations and Massacres, Ranching Ac-  
tivities, Operations of White Desperadoes  
and Thieves, Government Protection,  
Building of Railways, and the Dis-  
appearance of the Frontier

by

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Dedicated To My Wife



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\* These maps were specially prepared, chiefly from original sources, by the author and Mr. Max Mayer.



## Preface

The writer feels deeply indebted to his friends for aid given in the preparation of this volume. My colleague, Professor R. N. Richardson of the history department, Simmons University, carefully read the manuscript and made many useful suggestions concerning historical details. Professor Charles W. Ramsdell, history department, University of Texas, read the manuscript and was especially helpful in making suggestions concerning bibliography and citations, and in addition thereto, offered timely criticisms. Professor O. H. Cooper, department of education, Simmons University, also rendered very valuable assistance in constructive criticisms. The honorable R. C. Crane, president of the West Texas Historical Association, also read the manuscript and was helpful in elucidating conflicting accounts, in determining locations of places referred to by contemporary writers, etc. The writer is also not unmindful of the valuable aid rendered by his wife in proof-reading, and various odds and ends necessary in the preparation of a volume of this kind.

C. C. RISTER

Simmons University, November 1, 1927

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## Introduction

When the Civil War came to a close in 1865, immigrants began once more to turn their thoughts toward the unoccupied lands of the West. Of the great stretches of rich plains subject to cultivation, no region was more inviting than that known as the Southwest, embracing the vast hills and plains of the Indian Territory, Texas, and New Mexico. The traders of the Santa Fé Trail had long since told of the opportunities to be found in this region; the gold seekers, on their way to the mountains of California, had been duly impressed with the possibilities found here, and talked of returning some day; and many hardy home seekers of the Southern states, east of the Mississippi River, following the downfall of the Southern cause in 1865, were now ready to cast their fortunes in this virgin field.

Although the Southwest was pregnant with its possibilities, yet there were many problems to be solved, and much work to be done, before it could become the land of prosperous communities and happy homes. The pioneers in their scattered settlements were promised only hardships and social isolation in paving the way for future development. The lack of good roads and means of communication made it difficult to keep in touch with

the settlements farther east, and by reason of this, many conveniences and comforts of civilized communities were not to be found on the frontier. All these experiences were overshadowed, however, by the more trying one of enduring the murderous depredations and "moonlight" raids of the wild Indian tribes of the plains area.

In this volume the writer has attempted to describe the frontier of the Southwest before and after the Civil War. With the opportunities of development here after this great struggle, he has attempted to show how the government sought to protect the frontier interests of the state when the attention of the federal authorities was directed to its needs. The policy put into operation at this time was a defensive one, with the exception of Sheridan's winter campaign of 1868 against the Cheyenne, Comanche and Kiowa of the Washita country. Using this as a case in point, it is shown how the federal military policy lacked cohesion. Since this energetic campaign did not comprehend the whole of the Southwest, the Indians soon forgot the punishment inflicted at this time. Therefore, it is necessary to record separately the Jacksboro Indian affair of 1871, the campaigns of 1874-1875, and the suppression of the rebellious Mescaleros, 1878-1880.

When summary punishment was inflicted on the Indians, and they were forced to give up their claims to the unoccupied portion of the Southwest, the ranchers and farmers occupied the land. Pav-

ing the way to this new era came the destruction of the buffaloes, the building of railways, and the abandonment of the frontier posts. These evidences of a changing order of things are discussed in the closing chapters of this book.

The only reason the writer has to offer for presenting a volume of this kind is that it is done in order to point out the possibilities in the historical developments of this great region. The remarkable growth and improvement of the Southwest for the last seventy-five years has been one of the marvels of modern times, and yet the historians of our country have had but little to say about its history during this period. It is the wish of the writer, therefore, that new avenues of approach to the history of the Southwest from 1865 to 1881 will be opened to those seeking more light on the activities of our pioneers.



# The Southwestern Frontier in 1865



## The Southwestern Frontier in 1865

The Southwestern frontier in 1865 presented one of the most interesting possibilities of any undeveloped region of the United States. The country north of the Red River, which is now embraced in the states of Oklahoma, western Texas and New Mexico, was a vast domain comprising a part of our last American frontier. Before narrating the factors having to do with its development it is well to notice its geographical features; the abundance of animal and vegetable life which made this region a much desired hunting ground; and the Indian races having their ancestral camping grounds there.

So inviting was this region of the Southwest that the adventurous land-hunters from the more populated districts of the East eagerly pressed forward to claim its undulating plains and table-lands for their homes. The occupied portion of this area extended westward to a line, roughly drawn, along the western boundary of the portion of the Indian Territory occupied by the five civilized tribes<sup>1</sup> to Preston on the Red River, thence southward following an irregular semi-circle toward the south to

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<sup>1</sup> The civilized tribes were the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles.



Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande. Between this occupied part of Texas and the eastern boundary of the territory of New Mexico were a few scattered ranches which had been established beyond the frontier despite the ever present dangers from Indian depredations.<sup>2</sup>

The region west of Arkansas was known as the Indian Territory. During this period of time it was the habitat of many Indian tribes, five of which had been moved from the South in pursuance of the policy of the federal government. As a result of this movement the Indian Territory was created in 1834 as a permanent home for the Indians, but at the close of the Civil War the western portion of this region was taken away from the civilized tribes and hostile Indians were located there.

This part of the territory was the best watered section of the entire Southwest, being drained by the Arkansas, Canadian, and Red rivers and their numerous tributaries. These streams flowed through a country of a rolling table-land covered with luxuriant grass, though in places was to be found timber in abundance. In the southwestern portion of the territory were the Wichita Mountains in the vicinity of which were generally camps of the roving bands of Indians. The Antelope Hills, scattered along the Canadian River and reaching over into the Panhandle of Texas, was

<sup>2</sup> To understand the situation on the frontier at this time see *Semi-Official Letters of W. T. Sherman, 1868-1871*, I, 772-782. MSS, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington.

another chain of low mountains frequented by the red men. Thus, favored in this region by an abundance of grass, water, timber, and many varieties of game, the Indians had made this region an abiding place long before it had been set aside for them by the government.

A large portion of the country south of the Red River was rough and broken, being drained by the Pease, Wichita and Little Wichita rivers. Here hills, ravines, small streams and eroded terrain gave a portion of the country such a wild and desolate appearance as to offer no inducements to the home seekers. It did offer, however, an excellent hiding place for the marauding bands of savages when they were pursued by the rangers and United States troops from Texas.<sup>3</sup>

To the south of this region the headwaters of the Trinity, Brazos and Colorado rivers embraced a broken country which made an admirable rendezvous for all contemplated attacks, and, in case of pursuit, afforded many cañons and ravines by which the savages might escape to safety. Knowing every hill and valley of this country it was an easy matter for the wily Indians to escape from less experienced foes.<sup>4</sup> West of this region is a high table-land, known as the *Llano Estacado* or Staked

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<sup>3</sup> For a good description of this section during this time see *Report of Brevet Captain John Pope on Expedition to explore Route for Pacific Railway*, 1854, 33 Cong., 2 sess., *Exec. Docs.*, no. 91, pp. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Granger, *Southern and Western Texas Guide*, 1878, in which the counties are listed in alphabetical order; and Roberts, *Description of Texas*, 1881, 48.

Plains.<sup>5</sup> To the westward of the settlements for a distance of from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy-five miles, one saw what at first appeared to be a line of low-lying hills, running north and south; but upon mounting to the crest, some two hundred feet, there was found a broad table-land, stretching in a level, unbroken expanse to the westward. This was a vast treeless plain covered at that time with a thick coat of grass, and here and there, by patches of short, stubby oak and mesquite bushes.<sup>6</sup> So extreme was the cold in winter, and so limited the water supply in summer, that the wild tribes, because of their knowledge of the country, found a comparatively safe retreat here after one of their raids on the settlements.

Bounding this portion of the state of Texas on the west was the territory of New Mexico, where, at that time, very few people lived. A large part of the country presented a desolate appearance, semi-arid and mountainous, traversed by treeless plains and sandy deserts, with an average elevation above the sea of from 4000 to 6000 feet. With this altitude the country was unsuitable for carrying out extensive military operations in the winter with the result that the Indians found here a place where they had no fear of being molested at that season of the year.

On the south and southwest was the Rio Grande,

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<sup>5</sup> The ascent to the table-land is known as the Cap-rock.

<sup>6</sup> The Indians were more familiar with this region and its climatic changes, and the white pioneers were often placed at a disadvantage by reason of this fact.

or the *Rio Bravo del Norte*, which, from El Paso to its mouth, forms the boundary between the United States and Mexico. The area from the former point to the mouth of the Pecos, which empties into the Rio Grande, is more commonly known as the "Big Bend" country.<sup>7</sup> The course of the Rio Grande between these two points forms an irregular semi-circle, inclosing between two extremes a large territory broken by innumerable hills, cañons and mountain ranges. This region, from our earliest records describing it, was known to be the haunts of warlike Indian tribes.

Since a large portion of this vast region abounded in animal and vegetable life, the nomadic tribes occupying it were determined not to allow encroachments by the rising tide of immigration of white people directed that way. The struggle between the native races and the newcomers was started before the Texas Revolution for independence and had been carried on with an increasing degree of intensity as the savages were pushed on and on toward the west. Realizing that this was the last portion of unsettled regions of the Southwest the hostile savages were ready to assert their traditional rights to this domain, and the frontiersmen were equally determined to drive them out and occupy it. This attitude on the part of these two races resulted in one of the most sanguinary struggles

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<sup>7</sup> "Report of Expedition to Explore Route for Pacific Railway . . . by Captain John Pope, 1854" - Pecos and Rio Grande. In 33 Cong., 2 Sess., *Exec. Docs.*, no. 91, pp. 48-49.

ever carried out on our American frontier. "Moonlight raids," and even day-light depredations, were frequently made on the frontier by the wild Indians, while punitive expeditions and organized campaigns by way of reprisals were conducted by the settlers.

Had there been no recompense for the suffering of the frontiersmen from these innumerable raids, social isolation, and inconveniences entailed in building homes in this remote region, there would have been no justification in this stern struggle; but such was not the case. The luxuriant mesquite grass and the numerous small streams in many portions of it were elements favoring the development of the cattle industry, and the fertility of the soil presaged the development of a prolific agricultural section which would some day surprise the nation.

But few regions of the United States at that time offered such a reward to the Indian hunter as was to be found here.<sup>8</sup> Countless herds of buffalo and wild antelope had their habitat in this country. The Indians followed these herds from place to place, thus having a constant food supply, and from

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<sup>8</sup> A very interesting account of the various kinds of animal life to be found here at that time is preserved for us in the "Medical History of Fort Concho," in vol. 205 of Old Records Section, A. G. O., War Department, Washington. The Recorder here speaks of vast herds of bison, antelope, cotton-tailed deer, mustangs or wild horses. Of other animals he speaks of bear, lobo wolf, coyote, musk-hog, beaver, prairie-dog, rabbit, and skunk. He also mentions many kinds of birds such as eagles, turkeys, buzzards, ravens, crows, quail, ducks, plovers, swans, larks, and paradise birds.



the skins of these animals made clothing, moccasins, lariats, and many other useful things.

Along the streams crossing this region were found pecans, walnuts, wild plums, berries, and excellent timber for fuel, and in their waters were fish in great numbers. As far back as the seventeenth century the Spanish explorers spoke of these characteristics of the Southwest in glowing terms. The abundance of animal and vegetable life was an ever present wonderment and delight to them.

The Comanche was probably the most warlike tribe inhabiting this region. They were first located by the French in the eastern part of the state of Colorado. They obtained their horses from the Spaniards and were described as being expert in horsemanship, their celerity in mounting and riding astonishing their white friends.<sup>9</sup> The French opened up trading relations with them, buying horses which were doubtless stolen from the Spaniards living in the country south of the Rio Grande.

It is thought that the Comanche were pushed southward by the warlike Sioux, since we find them during the first half of the nineteenth century occupying the region between the Platte and the Rio Grande, taking in the headwaters of the Canadian, Arkansas, Brazos and Colorado rivers.<sup>10</sup> Within

<sup>9</sup> D. G. Wooten, *Comprehensive History of Texas*, 1, 771.

<sup>10</sup> As early as 1802 the Osage, a branch of the Caddoan family had begun to move down toward the Arkansas and to press the Indians found in that region to the south. For beginning of this movement see Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, part 2, (1910), pp. 157-158.

this region were sometimes found other smaller tribes which were usually in league with the powerful Comanche.<sup>11</sup> The number of the Comanche when first found by the French, were thought to be above 25,000, one-fifth of whom were warriors; but in 1816, 4000 of them died from the ravages of smallpox. In 1847, they numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 with about 2000 or 3000 of this number warriors. These were divided into eight tribes, each ruled by its own chief, and maintaining only a loose confederation.<sup>12</sup>

Associated with the Comanche, and closely allied with them, were the Kiowa, a tribe living in the Panhandle of Texas and in the region north and adjacent to the Red River. The limits to their hunting grounds were rather indefinite, and it was difficult to know just where the Comanche boundary began and the Kiowa boundary ended. In 1841, when the Santa Fé expedition passed through their country, Kendall, the historian of the expedi-

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For distribution of these tribes during previous century one should not fail to consult Professor H. E. Bolton's *Athanase de Mezieres and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780* (2 vols.), and *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*. Indian locations and relations are set forth by this writer in a simple, scholarly style. The manuscript bibliography accompanying these volumes is unusually comprehensive.

<sup>11</sup> The habits, customs and manners of the Comanche during this period are discussed in a colorful manner by Josiah Gregg in his *Commerce of the Prairies* (2 vols.). C. J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs—Laws and Treaties* (3 vols.), Washington, 1903-1913, contains the treaties of 1836 and 1865, recognizing the rights of the Comanche to this region.

<sup>12</sup> Though their numbers were reduced by the ravages of disease, they still maintained quite a formidable force. For their numbers during the following years consult the Indian reports.



tion, said that the Kiowa occupied the headwaters of the Colorado, Brazos, and Red rivers.<sup>13</sup> In discussing the characteristics of the Kiowa, he said that a warrior could throw himself on the opposite side of his horse while riding parallel with the enemy in such a manner as to conceal and protect himself while discharging arrows from under his horse's neck.<sup>14</sup> An epidemic of cholera brought from the coast by the California emigrants in 1849, visited the Kiowa camp and took a terrible toll of life. Hundreds of them died from its ravages and others committed suicide in their despair. Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century, the fighting strength of this tribe was considerably reduced.<sup>15</sup> Associated with the Comanche and Kiowa were the Kiowa-Apache. This was a small band which played no considerable part in the history of frontier depredations save as they were associated with the other two tribes referred to. As they were allied from the earliest times with the Kiowa, their history during this period is bound up with that of the latter tribe.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This is a bit confusing as this territory was the same as that occupied by the Comanche at that time, though later, by the treaty of 1865, the Kiowa, Comanche and Kiowa-Apache were recognized as joint owners of the same region.

<sup>14</sup> James Mooney, "Calendar History of the Kiowa," in *Seventeenth Annual Report of Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1895-1896, p. 180.

<sup>15</sup> Though the Kiowa were at times recognized as among the most feared warriors of this region, their numbers were not so great as the Comanche. James Mooney places the combined population of the Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache tribes at not more than sixteen thousand or eighteen thousand, and never more than that.

<sup>16</sup> The Kiowa-Apache mentioned above were not of the general

To the west of the Comanche, roaming over the extreme western part of Texas, the greater part of New Mexico, and the southern part of Arizona, were the fierce Apache tribes. During the period of Spanish occupation of Texas these tribes roamed as far east as San Antonio and as far north as the Red River. Jacob Sadelmeyer, a Catholic priest who visited the Rio Grande frontier in 1744, described this tribe as follows:

Within this circuit of three hundred leagues, the Apaches reside in small "rancherias," erected in the valleys and on the ridges of the mountains. The country is very difficult of access because of the cragginess of the mountains and the scarcity of water. According to some prisoners who have been ransomed, they are exceedingly savage and brutal. They have very little cultivated land because the country supplies them with plenty of spontaneous products. They are cruel to those who fall into their hands and among them are several apostates. They go entirely naked but make their incursions on horses of great swiftness which they have stolen from other parts, a skin serving them for a saddle. Of the same skins they make little shoes or boots of one piece, and by these they are traced in their flight. They begin the attack with shouts at a great distance to strike the enemy with terror. They have not naturally any great share of courage, but the little they can boast of is extravagantly increased on any great success. In war they rather depend on artifice than valor; and, being defeated, submit to the most ignominious terms, and keep their treaties no longer than suits their convenience. His Majesty has ordered that if any require peace it should be granted; and even offered to them before

Apache race located to the southwest of this tribe. In the early relations of this tribe it would seem that they came from the north and not southwest. For a fuller discussion of this tribe see Mooney's "Kiowa-Apache" in *Seventeenth Annual Report of Bureau of American Ethnology*, 245-253.

attack. But this generosity they construe to proceed from fear. Their arms are the common bows and arrows of the country. The intention of their incursions is plunder, especially horses, which they use both for riding and eating, the flesh of these creatures being one of their greatest dainties.<sup>17</sup>

In respect to the relations between the Apache and the people of the United States, the depredations of the Apache on the frontier of Texas began with the occupation of El Paso by the government in 1846-1847. Up to this time the Apache had generally confined their depredations to the Mexicans living in Mexico; but when the Overland Stage crossed the long stretch of open country between San Antonio and El Paso, thence through to California, the high prize of rich booty was too tempting for them to resist.<sup>18</sup> During the operation of this stage company these hostile savages frequently prevented the carrying out of a regular schedule, stopping the stages, pillaging its contents, and killing its occupants.<sup>19</sup>

The other hostile groups which played a minor

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<sup>17</sup> The Apache at this time rode about over the country from San Antonio westward, taking in a part of northern Mexico, the "Big Bend" country, and the vicinity to the north about the headwaters of the Brazos and Colorado rivers, and thence westward to New Mexico. Sadelmeyer's account is given by General Ord in his *Annual Report* of the activities in the military department of Texas for 1877. Old Records Section, A. G. O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>18</sup> During the Texas revolution period they also raided in the vicinity of San Antonio and were a source of annoyance to the Texas people.

<sup>19</sup> The daring exploits of these stage drivers constitute one of the most thrilling experiences of frontier people. Through the unsettled regions of the Southwest these fearless employees of the Overland Stage Company drove their stages when they were quite well aware

rôle in the depredations on the settlements of the Southwest during this period were the Cheyenne and Arapahoe. From the middle of the nineteenth century up to the close of the Civil War these two tribes were recognized by the Indian Bureau as controlling the region between the Platte and the Arkansas, thus displacing the Comanche of a part of the country formerly claimed by them.<sup>20</sup>

Two other tribes giving the people of Texas considerable trouble after the Civil War were the Lipans and Kickapoos. The former had for their hunting grounds a large portion of the country southeast of the Comanche and Kiowa, along the banks of the Colorado, Concho, and San Saba rivers, and thence toward Mexico. The earlier relations of this tribe with the white settlers show them to have been friendly. However, this friendship was changed to distrust and hatred when, in 1842, Flacco, one of their chieftans, was murdered by a disreputable white man, and from this time on the Lipans were enemies of the Texas people.

In 1855, an alliance was made between the Lipans and the cunning Kickapoo Indians, a small band which had for some time given trouble to both Texas and Mexico.<sup>21</sup> After this alliance was made, a safe retreat was found at San Fernando,

that the country was infested with warlike Indians, and at times their lives were given up as a forfeit for their disregard of danger. With them the principal object was to maintain a regular schedule of the stage, and in order to do this they often faced death and the scalping knife of their savage foes.

<sup>20</sup> F. L. Paxson, *History of American Frontier*, 1763-1893, p. 426.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of Lipan and Kickapoo relations through this

Mexico, from whence they made incursions into Texas, carrying on their work of pillaging and robbing frontier settlements until it was necessary for the authorities of both Texas and the United States to take drastic measures to put a stop to such devastating activities.<sup>22</sup>

One other tribe which played a part in the history of this period was the Tonkaway, which ranged during an earlier period along the Brazos and as far west as the source of the Guadalupe River. This tribe was an inveterate enemy of the Comanche, and probably because of this fact, was from earliest times friendly toward the American people in Texas. When two reservations for the Texas Indians were provided for in 1854, Placidio, chief of the Tonkaways, with his entire band, were placed on the lower one at Fort Belknap, Texas.<sup>23</sup>

In order to meet the request of the federal government for Indian reservations in the state, Texas set apart 55,728 acres of land in 1854. The Indian reserves of the state were to be under the supervision of Major R. S. Neighbors. Since it was not the purpose of the federal or state government to locate these tribes on the same reserve, two sites

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period, see Wooten's *Comprehensive History of Texas*, I, 738-744. The Kickapoos moved to Mexico in 1864.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* The Wichita, Caddo, and Waco tribes were troublesome in the pre-Civil War days but since they had but little to do with frontier history during this period no discussion of them will be attempted here.

<sup>23</sup> 46 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Ex. Docs.*, no. 74, pp. 26-27, and Kock, Lena Clara, "Federal Indian Policy in Texas," in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXIX, 98-103.



were provided for. The first was the Brazos Agency, near Fort Belknap, on the Brazos River; and the second, called Camp Cooper, about sixty miles in a southwesterly direction from Fort Belknap, was located on the Clear Fork of the Brazos in Throckmorton County. On the first reservation mentioned were placed 188 Caddoes, 205 Anadahkoes, 94 Wacoos, 136 Tahwaccaroos, and 171 Tonkaways – a total of 794 Indians. At the other reservation there were 277 Comanche in 1855, but by 1857 this number had increased to 437.<sup>24</sup>

From the time the Indians were located on these reservations until they were removed on June 6, 1859, there was constant friction between these wards of Texas and the settlers. The hostility of the latter toward the former became so bitter that on December 7, 1858, a band of settlers attacked a band of seventeen Anadahkoes and Caddoes in charge of Chocktaw Tom near Ritchie Creek, a few miles below their reservation, killing seven and wounding the remainder of those in camp.<sup>25</sup> From this time until the Indians were removed the enmity between the two races was pronounced. So threatening became the attitude of the settlers and so troublesome became the Comanche of the upper reserve, that all these tribes were removed north of the Red River. Undoubtedly the Comanche, after their removal from Texas, were made more

<sup>24</sup> 46 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Ex. Docs.*, no. 74, III, 26-27.

<sup>25</sup> *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1859*, p. 234.

antagonistic toward their white foes because of this trouble. They still continued to claim Texas as their hunting ground and were greatly incensed at the Texas authorities because these claims were not recognized. In speaking of the attitude of these savages toward the reservation affairs of Texas, the agent of the Wichita Reserve at a later time said: "It is the principal cause of their continuing to make raids into Texas to steal horses and mules."<sup>26</sup> Although this was not the principal cause of later raids, undeniably it did have a tendency to deepen the resentment of the Comanche toward the whites.

Thus, it is seen that the virgin expanses of the Southwest were a natural habitat for the red men; that the wild animal life and spontaneous production of wild fruits and nuts made this locality a desirable place in which to live; and that the location of the various Indian tribes threatened trouble for the incoming whites. The vast undeveloped region seemed to invite eager settlers to its charms as well as satisfy the savages. This invitation was answered by planting settlements along the frontier, while the Indians, claiming the region as their ancestral hunting ground, prepared to resist the encircling encroachments of the oncoming tide of immigrants with all the savage barbarity of which their minds were capable.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1869, p. 232.





## Federal Protection



## Federal Protection

The severe struggle encountered by the settlers coming to the vast region west of the Mississippi necessitated the appropriation by the federal government of millions of dollars in the erection and maintenance of its outposts. Since it was recognized that the Indians would not give up this region without a prolonged struggle, a line of defense was thrown out in advance of the frontier to protect the settlements. There was no definite line to be found in New Mexico, since all this territory was more or less under the control of the red men and a few bold, reckless traders and cattlemen. In the state of Texas, however, the general chain of defense began with Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande, running north toward the Dakotas. The portion of this line from the Rio Grande to the Red River was composed of Fort Duncan, near Eagle Pass; Fort Clark in Kinney County; Fort Stockton in Pecos County; Fort Terrett in Bexar County; Fort McKavett in Menard County; Fort Chadbourne in Runnels County; Fort Phantom Hill in Jones County; Camp Cooper in Throckmorton County; Fort Belknap in Young County; and ending at Preston in Grayson County on the Red River. Leaving Texas at this point the line proceeded

northward via Fort Cobb on the Washita, Indian Territory; Fort Larned, Kansas, on the Pawnee Fork, and thence on northward. This line marked the farthest advance of our general civilizing influences in 1861, although a few of our more bold pioneers had pushed out beyond the line of posts established by the federal government. Fort Bliss was also built during this period but it was used more for a Rio Grande post to guard against Mexican raids than to aid in the defensive scheme against the Indians.

So remarkably fast had been the development of the western part of the United States during this period that various efforts were put forth to connect the East and West by highways and other lines of communication. In the autumn of 1857 a contract for an overland mail line was awarded to John Butterfield by Aaron V. Brown, the Postmaster-general. The line was to have two eastern termini at St. Louis, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee. These two branch lines were to unite near Fort Smith, Arkansas, thence southward, crossing the Red River at Preston, via forts Belknap, Phantom Hill, Chadbourne, and thence westward via El Paso, Yuma, Arizona, to San Francisco. On September 15, 1858, Butterfield started his stages on a semi-weekly service from the western terminus to Tipton, Missouri, the eastern terminus at this time. A short time later the stages were run between the termini first mentioned, carrying mail and passengers. The first eastbound coach carried

an inspector of the post-office and made the journey of 2795 miles in twenty-four days, eighteen hours, and thirty-five minutes of actual running time. Professor Paxson quotes one traveler as saying: "Twenty-four mortal days and nights – twenty-five being schedule time – must be spent in that ambulance; passengers becoming crazy with whiskey, mixed with want of sleep, are often obliged to be strapped to their seats; their meals, dispatched during their ten minute halts, are simply abominable, the heats are excessive, the climate malarious; lamps may not be used at nights for fear of non-existent Indians," etc.<sup>27</sup>

With the outbreak of the Civil War the Butterfield line was discontinued, but in all probability it would have lasted but a short time longer had there been no interference of this kind. The experiment had proven costly indeed. The contractor was to be given \$600,000 a year for three years, but during the first year's operation the government receipts were only \$27,229.94. What, in the beginning, Postmaster-general Brown pronounced to be a "conclusive and triumphal success," he was forced to admit in 1859 as "wholly impracticable."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 464.

<sup>28</sup> Probably the best account of the operations of the Butterfield Stage line is R. N. Richardson's "Some Details of the Southern Overland Mail," in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, July, 1925, XXIX, 1-19. Professor Richardson's account is not only excellent, but in connection therewith, his citations are especially valuable. L. R. Hafen's *The Overland Mail, 1849-'69*, also has an excellent chapter on this stage line.



It was necessary for the troops stationed at the frontier posts to offer all the aid possible to guard against hostile attacks from the nomadic Indians, and even then the stages were frequently attacked by the savages, at times resulting in the loss of the mail and the lives of passengers and the drivers. Since the service over this line was hampered and interrupted by Indian attacks, bad roads, swollen streams, and other kinds of annoyances, the Postmaster-general was led to say in 1859 that the hope of the future in providing an efficient trans-continental service was in the building of railways.

The Texas frontier was the most difficult to protect, requiring a line of defense of more than 1300 miles in extent. For a short time before the outbreak of the Civil War the posts in this department were composed of an outer and inner chain. The inner chain when first established in 1849 was in advance of the frontier, but so fast had been the movement of westward expansion that in a period of a few years it was necessary to establish the second chain about two hundred miles farther west. For a few years after the second line was established troops were maintained in those first established, thus providing for an elastic system of defense.

Concerning the region between the outer and inner lines, the following theory was advanced by an army officer writing in 1853: "Before he (the Indian) has arrived at the scene of his contemplated depredations his trail is discovered before

he has made his attack and means are taken to intercept him even before he has alarmed the settlements. With rapid communication with the inner line, he will be attacked in front before he has struck a blow.”<sup>29</sup> The effectiveness of this system was not so great as might be inferred from the theory. Particularly was this true in the “Big Bend” sector of the line where this same writer complained that “the region between the Nueces and the Rio Grande is the range of wild cattle and horses, and is not inhabited except on the rivers and there sparsely; it is infested by thieves, robbers, and murderers from Mexico and Texas, and a few outrages committed there under these circumstances test the value of the defense.”<sup>30</sup>

The cavalry was placed in the second line for three reasons: (1), because they could procure forage and be maintained at less expense near the settlements, being nearer the source of production; (2), because the scene of their operations must necessarily be between the lines; and (3), it was the belief that they should be maintained near the settlers whom they were to protect.<sup>31</sup> It was the business of the cavalry to fall upon the marauders after their retreat had been closed to them by the infantry. The mounted riflemen were placed on the second line behind the Rio Grande because they

<sup>29</sup> *Report of an Inspection of Eighth Military District* by Colonel W. G. Freeman, April 23, 1853 – “appendix v,” 5-6, MS., Old Records Section, A. G. O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

were in the center and could be easily rushed to any point threatened on the outer line.

It was planned to supply the outer chain of posts from interior ones. The store-houses built on the outer line of defense were to supply any command of two hundred men and horses for a march to the front for one or two hundred miles, so that from this extreme point, which was formerly the extreme limit of such expeditions to the northwest, a march of equal length could be undertaken from the new base of operations. This was made possible by establishing a new base a hundred or more miles in the Indian country, using one company to bring up supplies from the interior posts and one or more companies to operate well within the Indian hunting grounds. Although it was intended to carry the war into the Indian country by this extended line of advance, it is unnecessary to say, however, that the immensity of the great plains to the westward made it impossible to carry out any such plan.

The posts composing the inner chain of defense were Fort Graham, established in 1848, on the Colorado River in Hill County; Fort Worth, built on the Trinity River in 1849; and Fort Gates placed on the Leon River in Coryell County in October of the same year. There was also established in this year on a tributary of the Colorado River in Burnet County, Fort Croghan. In sight of the Fredericksburg road, now in Mason County, was Fort Mason, then on Comanche Creek in Bexar County, established about the same time.

This post was not a part of either the outer or inner line of defense, but it was established to protect a German settlement in that vicinity.

On the exterior chain, previously referred to, there were six posts which were generally used in coöperation with the inner line. The first of these was Fort Belknap, established on the Brazos River in Young County on September 3, 1850. This post was placed in a strategic position as it faced directly the hostile tribes living along the Red River. On November 14 of the next year five companies of the Fifth Infantry, which were stationed there, were moved to a point about fifty miles southwest of this point and there established Phantom Hill on the Clear Fork of the Brazos. Another post in this line was Camp Cooper, established on the Clear Fork of the Brazos in Throckmorton County in 1856 to protect reservation Indians stationed there. On south of Phantom Hill was Fort Chadbourne, built on October 28, 1852, on Oak Creek, a tributary of the Colorado River. Still south of this post were forts McKavett and Clark, the former in Menard County on the San Saba River, the latter forty-five miles north of Eagle Pass, both established in 1852.<sup>32</sup>

During the period of the Civil War these posts were in the control of the confederate troops, at times being garrisoned and at times being aban-

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<sup>32</sup> For the construction of these posts see *Report of an Inspection of the Eighth Military District* by Colonel W. G. Freeman, April 23, 1853, "appendix v," MS., Old Records Section A. G. O., War Department, Washington.

doned to meet the emergencies brought about by the paucity of numbers obtainable for such purposes. With the reoccupation by federal troops<sup>33</sup> at the close of the Civil War the exterior line of posts were regarrisoned and other new posts were built to fill in some of the gaps through which the savages pillaged the frontier. It was the intention of the commander of the department to make the new defensive system more effective by connecting up these posts by telegraph lines, which was later done, and to build roads from one post to the other and from the interior settlements to them over which supplies could be hauled.

South of the Red River, Fort Richardson was the first post built during this period.<sup>34</sup> It was located on the south bank of Lost Creek, near the village of Jacksboro, which was the county seat of Jack County. The nearest settlement to Jacksboro was Weatherford, Parker County, forty-two miles

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<sup>33</sup> Just before General Twiggs retired from command of the Department of Texas in 1860, he came to an agreement with Colonel McCulloch of the state forces whereby he agreed to give up all the Texas posts and withdraw from the state. He was removed from command, however, before this agreement could be carried out, and Colonel Carlos A. Waite was placed in command of the Department. There was nothing else for Waite to do but carry out the terms of surrender. Because he was slow in carrying out these terms, he and fourteen companies of his troops were forced to surrender to the state forces, now under the direction of the Confederacy. A few companies did escape, however, by embarking on a federal ship at a South Texas port.

<sup>34</sup> A very good map showing the location of each of these posts and the plan of defense is filed with the annual report of the departmental commander for 1869, file no. 1538-M, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



to the southeast. The village of Jacksboro was a station on the Overland Mail route coming via Fort Concho to Fort Smith, Arkansas.<sup>35</sup> The post was occupied by a military detachment in the summer of 1866; abandoned in 1867, except as a mail station, and the troops stationed there moved to Fort Belknap and Buffalo Springs. The latter point, in Clay County, was selected as being a more advantageous site for a military post than Jacksboro, but when the water supply was found inadequate for a post such as was contemplated, the place was given up and the troops moved back to Jacksboro, where on February 6, 1868, the site, previously referred to, was reoccupied. Immediately buildings were erected to care for the troops consisting of four picket (jackal) houses for the enlisted men, with capacity of three hundred and fifty men; one quartermaster's building of the same material, with capacity of 2500 bushels of grain; one stone hospital; a guard house with four cells; bakery; powder magazine; and a shed for one hundred mules.<sup>36</sup>

Fort Richardson was one of the most important posts in Texas. Situated near the Indian Territory it played a prominent part in the defensive system against the hostile warriors and in protecting the cattle trade. It was first occupied by seven com-

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> These posts were merely cantonment camps and not fortified posts as might be supposed. Though two or three field pieces were kept to instill respect among the Indians the primary purpose was to house the troops.

panies of the Sixth Cavalry and one company of the Seventeenth Infantry, under the command of Brevet Lieutenant-colonel S. H. Starr.<sup>37</sup>

One year previous to the establishment of Fort Richardson, however, another new post was established on this sector of the line. It became necessary to abandon Fort Belknap as a regular post because of the insufficiency of water,<sup>38</sup> and a surveying party was sent out to pick a new site in the vicinity. After carefully surveying the surrounding country, a place was finally chosen on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River, now in Shackelford County, thirty-seven miles above Fort Belknap. The post was first designated Camp Wilson, in honor of Lieutenant Wilson, son of a United States Senator from Massachusetts. The name was subsequently changed to Fort Griffin by the officer commanding the post, in honor of General Griffin, an earlier commander of the Department of Texas. The post was established on the afternoon of July 31, 1867.

At this post it was proposed to build permanent

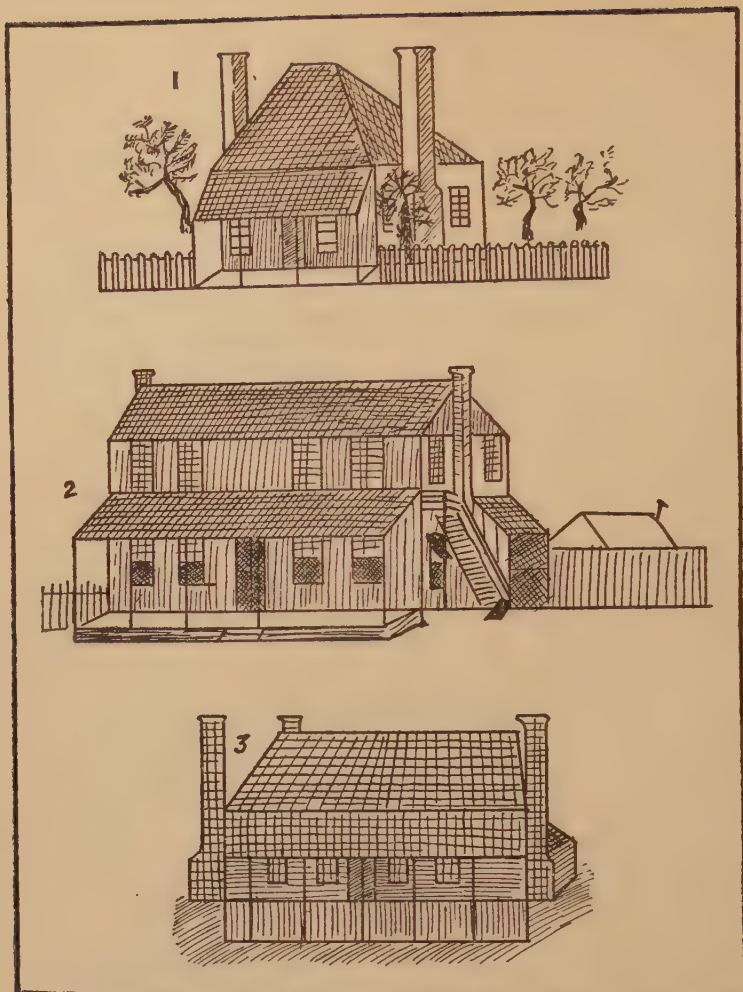
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<sup>37</sup> The forces stationed here were companies A, C, D, E, F, H, and M of the Sixth Cavalry, and Company D of the Seventeenth Infantry. For description of posts and details connected with its establishment see *Medical History of Fort Richardson* in vol. 120, p. 3, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department; and *Description of United States Military Posts and Stations*, 1871, Q.M.G.O.; and for garrison see *Post Returns* for month of establishment, in *loc. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Water for the post was not taken from the Brazos River but from a well which was dry a part of the season, during which time it was necessary to haul water from a stream six miles distant. The waters of the Red Fork of the Brazos upon which the post was located were unsuited for drinking, cf., *Special Returns*, no. 73 (Fort Griffin), MS., June 6, 1881, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



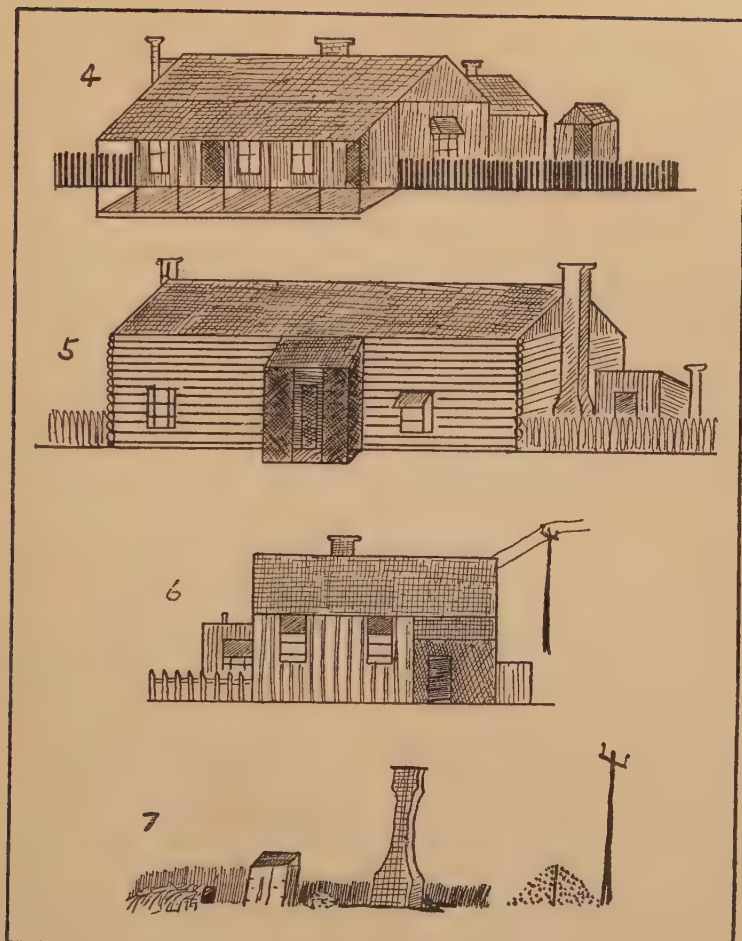




### OFFICERS' QUARTERS, 1876

- (1) Quarters occupied by Capt. Geo. L. Choisy, 11th Infantry, at Fort Griffin, Texas, viewed from orderly room window of Company F, 11th Infantry. (2) Quarters occupied by Capt. Theodore Schwan of 11th Infantry, at Fort Griffin, Texas, viewed from orderly room window of Company F, 11th Infantry (the only two-story building at Fort Griffin). (3) "No legend given, but probably quarters of Capt. L. Cotting, 11th Infantry."

Reproduced from original drawings made by J. Howard, February, 1876



### OFFICERS' QUARTERS, 1876

(4) Quarters occupied by 1st Lieut. L. H. Orleman of the 10th Cavalry at Fort Griffin, Texas. (5) Quarters of 2nd Lieut. G. H. Evans, 10th Cavalry, viewed from orderly room window of Company F, 11th Infantry. (6) Quarters occupied by 2nd Lieut. W. W. Shipman, 11th Infantry, at Fort Griffin, Texas. (7) Ruins of Quarters occupied by Lieut.

Shipman, 11th Infantry, destroyed by fire Feb. 18, 1876, at 7 P.M.

Reproduced from original drawings made by J. Howard, February, 1876



structures of stone, and every preparation to that effect was made. Steam saw-mills, window-sashes, door-frames, tools, and a number of mechanics were provided by Brevet-Colonel J. B. C. Lee, Depot-quartermaster at San Antonio, Texas. As it was supposed to take years to complete the permanent buildings, temporary quarters for the officers and men were erected.<sup>39</sup> Small wooden houses were built for the privates and non-commissioned officers, and a line of officers' huts were put up, consisting of one room and kitchen each. Two buildings of two rooms and a hall each were hauled in from deserted ranches near by, one of which was to be used for commissary quarters and the other for a hospital. A sufficient number of buildings could not be erected at this time with the result that six men were compelled to sleep in one of these huts, fourteen by eight feet, and five feet and ten inches to the roof.<sup>40</sup>

Four companies of the Sixth Cavalry, formerly stationed at Fort Belknap, were moved up to the new post. Brevet Colonel Sturgis was given command of the post. Though this was not a large force it was considered sufficient for all emergencies, since on such occasions it could coöperate with that stationed at Fort Richardson, giving a combined strength of approximately 1000 men.

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<sup>39</sup> Officers were accused of using soldiers to erect comfortable quarters for officers instead of fighting Indians, see *San Antonio Daily Express*, March 3, 1871.

<sup>40</sup> *Medical History of Fort Griffin*, in vol. 51, pp. 1-3, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

Three of the older posts, Belknap, Phantom Hill <sup>41</sup> and Chadbourne were not occupied as regular outposts, but were garrisoned from time to time as picket posts to give protection to the mail line connecting the chain of defense; and also to be used for temporary bases for operations against the Indians, and escorts for surveying parties sent out on the frontier. Since the buildings at Phantom Hill had been burned after its evacuation in 1854, tents were erected to house the troops which were from time to time stationed there.<sup>42</sup>

Fort Concho was also a new post established on this line. On November 12, 1867, a board of officers selected a site at the present town of San Angelo, for a new post, and on December 4, of the same year, four companies of the Fourth Cavalry were stationed there. The place was first called Camp Hatch, after its commander, then Camp Kelly, and finally in March, 1868, given the name of Fort Concho, after the stream upon which it was located. The post was situated three hundred and six miles southwest of Denison, Texas, and about one hundred miles northwest of Fort Mason, at which place was the nearest post-office.

The buildings of Fort Concho were of more durable material than that of the posts to the north. Stone was used for the construction of the more important buildings. The large buildings were con-

<sup>41</sup> Officially known as the "Post on the Clear Fork of the Brazos."

<sup>42</sup> *Special Orders, no. 24, 1871-May 5, 1878, Fort Griffin*, 1, 19, MS., Old Records Section, A. G. O., War Department, Washington.



structed for the enlisted men, ample to accommodate two hundred; five buildings for the officers' quarters; hospital to accommodate thirty patients; guard house made of pecan plank; corral of stone; and other buildings used for various purposes. However, with these buildings, conditions were not the best. The cramped conditions of the fort are revealed in the following extract taken from the *Medical History* of the Post:

There is no Post Chapel, although it is a Chaplain Post, and a Post Chaplain is stationed here, and one who contrary to the army chaplains as a class, receives universal regard and attention, being unusually looked upon as one who practices what he preaches and to be sincere in his desire for the spiritual welfare of those around him. Yet he really has a hard time in finding a proper place to preach, shifting here and there, dodging the continual military necessities, now in the hospital again in his private quarters, putting heavy tax on the carpets, etc. It seems to lend an air of civilization to a frontier and desolate station, not regarding the spiritual obligations, to be able to attend divine worship; besides if these facilities are not afforded, many worse things are liable to be indulged in, as Chess and Card playing, etc., with the seeming necessary concomitance drink, leading possibly to military criminations and personal as well as official tribulations.<sup>43</sup>

Fort McKavett was another of the old posts reoccupied, but not until after many improvements had been made. It was reoccupied by United States troops on April 1, 1868. The fort was originally built of stone but due to the fact that the stones

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<sup>43</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, in vol. 205, p. 298, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

were improperly in place at the time of reoccupation, only one of the buildings was habitable.<sup>44</sup>

Until March, 1869, very little work had been done on the buildings, because of the lack of mechanics and the extreme slowness with which material was supplied. Upon this date, however, the two companies of troops stationed there were relieved by two companies of the Forty-first Infantry and two companies of the Ninth Cavalry (Negro troops), under the command of Brevet Brigadier-general R. S. Mackenzie. Almost immediately this energetic officer started the work of rejuvenating the post. Ample and substantial corrals for the horses were built; barracks for the men were put in complete repair; and company kitchens, a guard house, sinks, and all outbuildings were thoroughly renovated. Officers' quarters were rebuilt with new floors, doors, windows and roofing. Thus, after a few weeks of work, the fort took on the appearance of a well ordered and neatly kept place.<sup>45</sup>

Fort Stockton was the next post in the new line of defense although not linked up with the original chain. Although built before the Civil War, the primary object in its construction was to protect the mail route from San Antonio to El Paso against the depredations of both Indians and outlaws of that region. It was first occupied as a military post

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Circular no. 4—Report on Barracks and Hospitals*, May 5, 1870, p. 203, War Department, Washington.

in 1858, and abandoned in May, 1861. It was re-occupied by Brigadier-general Hatch with four companies of the Ninth Cavalry and one company of the Forty-first Infantry, on July 7, 1867. The character of the post was about the same as that of the other forts to the north with the exception that the buildings were constructed largely of adobe material.<sup>46</sup>

Forts Davis and Quitman were two other posts in the "Big Bend" section which were built to protect the stage line and immigrant road, running east and west. As in the case of the other posts these positions were given up with the approach of the great war between the states, but when the conflict subsided they were again occupied. After a long march of four hundred and sixty-eight miles from San Antonio, Texas, four companies of the Ninth Cavalry, under the command of Brigadier-general Wesley Merritt, occupied Fort Davis on the afternoon of July 1, 1867. Fort Quitman, on the Rio Grande, was reoccupied by Captain Henry Carroll, with one company of the Ninth Cavalry, on January 1, 1868.<sup>47</sup> The buildings at both these posts were largely of the same material as that of Fort Stockton, and in a general way, the plan was to provide only for housing of the men and materials, rather than defenses. Since Fort Quitman soon

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<sup>46</sup> Adobe is a term applied to sun-dried blocks of mud which become almost as hard as bricks.

<sup>47</sup> For establishment of these two posts see *Post Returns* of each on months of establishment as given above, on file in Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

ceased to play a considerable part in the scheme of defense after the end of the Comanche and Kiowa troubles, it was abandoned on January 5, 1877, in conformity with an order from the commander of the Department of Texas. Fort Davis, however, became one of the more important links in the chain of the Rio Grande defense, being used as a point from which to project many of the expeditions against the Mescalero Apache during the Victorio War of 1878-1880.<sup>48</sup>

Fort Bliss was established near El Paso, and at first called the "Post of El Paso," in February, 1848, and garrisoned by three companies of the First Dragoons and one of the Santa Fé Battalion, Third Missouri Mounted Volunteers. The designation of the post was changed to Fort Bliss on March 8, 1854. The post was evacuated, as were the other posts, during the Civil War period, but was reoccupied on March 1, 1867. The buildings and general characteristics of this post were about the same as the others of the "Big Bend" district. It was supplied by contract, food, etc., being hauled for a distance of seven hundred miles.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to this group of posts in the "Big Bend" region which did not fit in with the northwestern chain in a practical way, there were two

<sup>48</sup> At all of these posts in the "Big Bend" district were stationed Negro troops. General Sherman later testified before a congressional committee that they got along better with the Mexicans than they did with the frontiersmen of Texas.

<sup>49</sup> *Post Returns of Fort Bliss*, February, 1848; March, 1854; and March, 1867, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

other important posts on westward in the New Mexico Territory, and another chain running down the Rio Grande from Eagle Pass to Brownsville.

In respect to the New Mexico posts there was only one of these built before the Civil War. Fort Stanton was established May 4, 1855, for the purpose of controlling the Mescalero Apache and was situated on the Rio Bonita, rising in the White Mountains. It was abandoned on August 2, 1861, but was reoccupied after the Civil War by four companies of the Eighth Cavalry and one company of the New Mexico Volunteers, under the command of Captain I. V. D. Reeves. Fort Bascom, the other post in this region, was located on the east bank of the Canadian River in San Miguel County. The post was named in honor of Captain George Bascom, Sixteenth Infantry, who fell in the battle of Val Verde, February 21, 1862. It was first garrisoned by one company of the Third United States Cavalry, under the command of Captain Francis H. Wilson. This post was useful in keeping under submission the Comanche and Kiowa of the Canadian and Red rivers region.

Of the chain of posts on the lower Rio Grande frontier, Fort Brown was the first to be reoccupied. This was one of the earliest of the federal posts established in Texas. In 1846, during the Mexican War, a six-bastioned field work, Fort Brown, was thrown up by the troops under the command of General Zachary Taylor, and when he marched to



Point Isabel to bring up his supply train, the fort was garrisoned by the Seventh Infantry under the command of Major Brown. During the absence of General Taylor, Major Brown was slain while defending his position against an attack by the Mexicans. Though Brown was killed the post was not taken, being subjected to a gruelling bombardment for seven days. The Mexicans finally attempted to assault the place but were driven off by a well directed fire of canister and grape shot. General Taylor later relieved the post after the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. New improvements were added, but when the Civil War came, it was abandoned by the federal troops. It was occupied during the period of the Civil War by confederate troops, under the command of General Bee, but upon evacuation in 1864, it was burned. The site was reoccupied in July, 1865, by two companies of the Fourth United States Cavalry, and one company of the First Artillery, and one company of the One Hundred and Fourteenth Volunteers, under the command of Captain J. B. McIntyre. This fort had the most historic experience of all the posts along the Rio Grande.<sup>50</sup>

Fort Clark, north of Eagle Pass, was the next post on this line to be occupied. On December 10, 1866, Captain John A. Wilcox, with Company C of the Fourth Cavalry arrived to occupy the post.

<sup>50</sup> *Post Returns of Fort Brown, July, 1865*. Detailed account of post and equipment is found in *Medical History of Fort Brown*, in vol. 517, July, 1868-January, 1873. Both of these sources on file in Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



Necessary repairs were made and the post soon took on the air of a regular military establishment. The fort, from 1875 to 1881, became one of the more important links in the line of defense during the trying days of the Victorio War and other border troubles during that period of time.<sup>51</sup>

The reoccupation of Fort McIntosh and Fort Duncan completed the defense of the lower Rio Grande. The former was garrisoned by Company F, One Hundred and Seventeenth Infantry, under the command of Captain H. M. Hutchins. The arrival of this force was on March 8, 1867. The latter post was occupied by Company I, Forty-first Infantry, commanded by Brevet Lieutenant-colonel F. M. Crandel. With its occupation on March 23, 1868, new and ample quarters were put in order for the officers and men.<sup>52</sup>

Situated north of the Red River in the Indian Territory were three important government posts in the heart of the Indian country. Fort Cobb was the first of these posts to be established. On October 1, 1859, this fort was built by two companies of the First Cavalry and two companies of the First Infantry, under the command of Major W. H. Emory. The location of the post was on the west bank of the Washita River, near the present town of Fort Cobb. The fort was abandoned on May 5, 1861, but was reoccupied after the Civil War.

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<sup>51</sup> *Post Returns of Fort Clark, July, 1868*, MS. on file in Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>52</sup> *Post Returns* for March, 1867, and March, 1868, in *loc. cit.*

Since this post did not serve well the purpose of keeping the Indians to the south of it quiet, on March 4, 1869, Colonel B. H. Grierson, with four companies of the Tenth Cavalry (Negro troops) and two companies of the Sixth Infantry, established Camp Wichita, on a branch of Cache Creek. The name of the post was changed to Fort Sill on July 2 of the same year. The third post in this region was Camp Supply, established on November 18, 1868, in the northwestern part of the Indian Territory, on a low sandy bottom between Beaver and Wolf creeks, and near their junction. It was first established during the winter campaign of General Sheridan against the Comanche, Cheyenne and Kiowa, in order to have a base of operations near the Indian country.

Still on north of the Indian Territory were two important posts during this period of time. Fort Larned, Kansas, was the first of these to be established. First named Camp Albert, this post was established on October 22, 1869, by First Lieutenant Davis Bell, with Company K of the First Cavalry. It was situated on the right bank of the Pawnee Fork about seven miles from its junction with the Arkansas River in order to offer protection to the Santa Fé Trail. It was named in honor of Colonel B. F. Larned, then Provost-marshal General. Fort Dodge, Kansas, the second of the posts in this state, was situated on the north bank of the Arkansas River, and also on the Santa Fé Trail. It was first occupied by Company A, First

Battalion, Eighteenth Infantry, and Company K of the Second Cavalry, under the command of First Lieutenant G. S. Carpenter, on September 9, 1865. Both of these posts were bases for the activities of the federal forces in operations against the Indian tribes of the Southwest, and were centers about which western settlements sprang up.

At no time did these frontier posts have adequate means of communication with the well settled sections. At some of the posts the mail service was fairly regular, while at others it was very poor. At Fort Griffin the mail arrived four times a week. From the East, via St. Louis and Fort Smith, the coaches arrived on Sundays and Thursdays; and from the West, via San Antonio and Fort Concho, they arrived on Mondays and Thursdays. This fort was one of the more favored in such respects, but even here the mail would be delayed at times because of floods and freshets occurring during the rainy season.<sup>53</sup> This was also the case with other posts. Government wagon-trains, sometimes consisting of as many as ten wagons, drawn by horses, mules, and oxen, brought supplies to the posts from San Antonio and Austin. At times these transports were held up to such an extent that food supplies were unsuitable for consumption when they arrived at the posts.

In some instances the soldiers suffered from the

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<sup>53</sup> Difficulties incident to supplying the posts in Texas are discussed in article captioned "Military Matters in Texas" in *Flake's Daily Bulletin*, Galveston, Texas, May 18, 1867.

lack of a proper diet; however, this was not generally the case. Records available on this point prove that the troops were fairly well cared for in respect to food. As an instance of the food eaten by the soldiers on holiday occasions, the following is an interesting Christmas menu: breakfast, cold roast beef, coffee and bread; dinner, potatoes, tomatoes, pudding, roast beef, green corn, pies, cakes, pickles, and coffee; and the food for supper was the same as that for their noon meal.<sup>54</sup> Fresh meat was to be had in abundance from the wild game abounding in the vicinity of almost all the posts, and in addition to this source, the streams were well filled with fish. This, added to the articles of food brought to the posts from the settlements, gave to the soldiers a varied diet while at the posts. At times, however, the soldiers suffered from stomach ailments as a result of having to eat their own bread which they baked in "Dutch ovens" while on escort duty.

The life of the average soldier at one of the frontier posts was a strenuous one. Up at reveille, and busy until the evening, he spent the day in escort duty, protecting surveying parties, railroad construction gangs, protecting trade caravans, building structures at the post, fighting Indians, or

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<sup>54</sup> This interesting menu was served to the soldiers of Fort Griffin on December 25, 1874. Though their diet on other days was not quite so elaborate, it was sufficient and generally wholesome. A menu schedule, running through several weeks, is found in *Medical History of Fort Griffin*, in vol. 52, p. 43, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

following them on long arduous marches. Many times while on extended campaigns, he suffered from intense heat or bitter wintry weather, being driven to the point of desperation from the lack of water or food. Yet though this was true, there was an astonishingly small number of soldiers who died from exposure on the great plains.

All the time of the soldier, however, was not spent in active campaigning on the frontier. At times life was irksome enough. Deprived of the comforts of the settled communities, and enduring the isolation of the frontier posts, he was compelled to spend a part of his time in idleness. On such occasions it was the custom to engage in card playing, chess or checkers, and often these games were accompanied with drunken brawls, as a result of which the participants would frequently have to be carried to the hospital for treatment from knife cuts or gun-shot wounds sustained in such encounters. Many times court-martial trials were the outcome of such affairs, ending in the one tried being sent to the guard house or put on extra fatigue duty. On rare occasions the penalty meted out was severe. At one of the Texas posts a soldier was suspended by his thumbs until he lost them. This punishment, however, was the result of the arbitrary action of a drunken officer who received a prison sentence for his cruelty.

The average soldier on the frontier led a colorful life, even though these unpleasant experiences sometimes came his way. Generally brave and

trustworthy, it can be said that he was one of the most hardy, efficient defenders of our country who ever followed the flag.



## Indian Traders and Thieves



## Indian Traders and Thieves

From the time that Texas became a state of the Union up to 1861, settlers poured into this portion of the Southwest. Even New Mexico was a recipient of a part of this immigration. Settlers were seeking homes in what was then known as hunting grounds of the Comanche and Kiowa. Many of the immigrants had started for California to the gold fields, or to the new *El Dorado* of Colorado, and having failed to realize their dreams there, had turned aside for the more sober task of establishing cattle ranches or farms.<sup>55</sup> The Southwest was in a fair way of development when in 1861-1865 the Civil War like a mighty scourge swept away most of these evidences of civilization. Through this fearful period the frontier was practically deserted save by roving bands of Indians and occasional bands of federal or confederate troops,

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<sup>55</sup> Of the large number of people bound for these new gold fields in 1858, Agent William Bent of the Kiowa and Comanche, said: "I estimate the number of whites traversing the plains across the central belt to have exceeded sixty thousand during the present season. The trains of vehicles and cattle are frequent and valuable in proportion. Post lines and private expresses are in constant motion. The explorations of this season have established the existence of the precious metals in absolutely infinite abundance and convenience of position. A concourse of whites is, therefore, constantly swelling an incapability of control or restraint by the government."—*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1859, pp. 137-139.

making a show of protecting the defenseless settlements.<sup>56</sup>

With the close of the Civil War in 1865, the Southwestern frontier presented a pitiable spectacle: homes were in ashes; fields, which had been verdant with growing crops in 1861, were now filled with weeds and grass; and horses and cattle had been driven away by outlaws and Indians, or were running wild on the open range.

So bold and devastating were the depredations of hostile Indians west of the Mississippi at this time that the problem of satisfactorily adjusting these disturbances was a matter of national concern. Hundreds of people were being massacred along the entire frontier while others were forced to endure the horrors of "moon-light raids" and uncertainties of frontier life.<sup>57</sup> Plans for the building of transcontinental railways and bringing the East in contact with the West were held in abeyance until the warlike tribes of the West were pacified. Even the home seekers, who were coming to this region in vast numbers prior to 1861, were reluctant to enter a country where death and destruction of property awaited their coming.

Such were the conditions in the Southwest when on July 20, 1866, President Johnson approved an act creating an Indian commission for the purpose of making peace with all the Indian tribes living

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<sup>56</sup> For an account of these depredations see the *Waco Register*, April 21, 1866.

<sup>57</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1869, p. 41.

west of the Mississippi.<sup>58</sup> Shortly after the commission was formed it was divided into two sub-committees, one going among the Sioux and other tribes of the North, the other sent toward the South to conclude a treaty with the hostile tribes found there. It is not purposed to discuss incidents having to do with the work of the sub-committee sent to the northern tribes since these movements had but little to do with the Indian affairs of the Southwest, but it is highly important to discuss the chief features of the treaty with the southern tribes because of trouble which later arose in the Southwest in putting the treaties into effect.

On October 21, 1867, the sub-committee sent to the Southwest concluded a treaty of peace with the Kiowa, Comanche and Kiowa-Apache tribes at Medicine Lodge, Kansas.<sup>59</sup> The treaty provided for the withdrawal of the Indians from the region between the Platte and Arkansas rivers, and for the construction of railways through this country. In connection with this provision the Indians agreed to go on a reservation set apart for them, the boundaries of which were as follows: the line on the east was the ninety-eighth meridian; on the south and west it was to follow the Red River and its

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<sup>58</sup> *Personal Memoirs of W. T. Sherman*, II, 412.

<sup>59</sup> C. J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs - Laws and Treaties*, II, 977. The place of the treaty site is on Medicine Lodge Creek, Barber County, Kansas. At the same time that this treaty was concluded, a similar one was made with the Cheyenne and Arapahoe by which these tribes were placed on a reservation north of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Kiowa-Apache.

north fork; on the north the Washita, from the ninety-eighth meridian up to a point thirty miles by the river from Fort Cobb and thence by a line running due west to the north fork of the Red River.<sup>60</sup> The treaty provided for the cessation of hostilities on the settlements of Texas and other western states, and as an inducement to these marauders to cease their depredations, the government promised to appropriate \$25,000 annually for a period of thirty years "for the judicious purchase of such articles as may seem proper to the condition and necessities of the Indians."<sup>61</sup> All annuity goods were to be issued in the presence of an army officer detailed for the purpose who should inspect and report on the quality and quantity of the goods and the manner of the delivery of the same.<sup>62</sup> In addition to this promise by the commissioners, the government was to furnish implements and tools for farming; and blacksmiths, teachers, and other helpers to start them on the road to civilization.<sup>63</sup>

Though this treaty was definite in defining the rights of the Indians and in setting forth the privileges of the same, it did not meet with the full approval of all the Indians. Many complaints were made by the disgruntled savages. Kicking Bird, a chief of the Kiowa and a loyal friend of the whites,

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Mooney, "Calendar History of the Kiowa" in *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1895-1896, p. 185.

<sup>62</sup> Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 979. This "judicious" policy on the part of Indian agents often led to charges of favoritism by the savages.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*



said that the sole cause of Kiowa hostility was the unequal distribution of presents. The agent of the Wichita Reserve wrote that the Comanche in excusing themselves from all blame in depredating on Texas after signing the treaty said that they had never ceded away Texas and that it was their original home. The agent stated that the Comanche had gone since that time no less than forty times on forays into this state, and that they had killed forty or fifty people, captured as many women and children, and stolen thousands of horses. He further called attention to the fact that at the time of writing several war parties were depredating in Texas.<sup>64</sup> Another writer said that the Indians complained that numerous routes through their country prevented the buffalo from ranging north and south as formerly; that they were being driven into the Rocky Mountains; that in hunting they would have to travel too far north or south to get the range of these animals which before had wandered all over the plains.<sup>65</sup> Undoubtedly the inroads on the Indians' hunting grounds by the whites and the slaughter of the buffalo, the Indians' sole food supply, save the annuities issued by the government, brought about a grave problem. The savages were now not allowed to roam at will without molestation, though their roving habits were more or less

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<sup>64</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1869, p. 393. Tsentainte, a young war chief, was one of the most noted violators of the treaty, saying that the old chiefs could make treaties but that he and his young braves would continue to make war on Texas.

<sup>65</sup> *Flake's Daily Bulletin*, Galveston, Texas, October 30, 1867.

instinctive with them, and to make a foray on the white settlements of the Southwest was but an incident in their daily lives.

In addition to these general causes for dissatisfaction on the part of the Indians, the irregular trade carried on by the white traders in the region north of the Red River tended further to increase the redskins' depredations on the whites. One of the Texas editors, as early as October, 1867, called attention to the practice of D. A. Butterfield wherein he sold to the Apache at Fort Larned infantry coats which cost him one dollar and twelve and one-half cents for eleven dollars; blankets, for which he gave thirteen dollars, for twenty-three dollars. He stated that Butterfield made an agreement with the Kiowa to rob his train in order that he might put in a claim against the government for losses, and that the agreement was carried out. This was not the first time that the trading activities of Butterfield were questioned. When the sale of arms and ammunition by the traders to the Indians was brought to the attention of General W. T. Sherman,<sup>66</sup> he addressed, on January 26, 1867, the following letter to General U. S. Grant:

The inclosed papers are so important that I ask for them

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<sup>66</sup> General W. T. Sherman was made commander of the Division of the Missouri at the close of the Civil War. This position was given to him partially in recognition of the brilliant service which he rendered during the Civil War. The southern portion of his division was known as the Department of Missouri and should not be confused with the larger division referred to. General P. H. Sheridan was in command of the department referred to and rendered valuable service in dealing with the Indians.

your special attention. The sale of arms and ammunition to the Indians is the most delicate operation conceivable. The recent dispatches passed between us have been sent to my department commanders for their government, but of course I expect the sale to be controlled by Post Commanders and limited in quantity to powder and lead absolutely needed by the Indians known to the local commanders and for the purpose of killing meat for food.

Now it seems the aggregated Indian agents and commissioners for the Comanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes, and Arrapahoes (all bold, daring and active Indians, inclined all the time to break out into open warfare) have given unlimited authority to Mr. D. A. Butterfield and to other regularly licensed Indian traders to sell arms and ammunition to any Indians that are at peace with, and receiving annuities from the United States Government.

The theory seems to me so monstrous that I would not credit it, unless I had the papers well authenticated before me, and I have ordered General Hancock to disregard it, and to restrict the sales to small quantities, which alone are compatible with the present attitude of things on the vast plains, and which is the most difficult problem I have ever had to handle, to make comparatively secure. If the Indian agents are to be intrusted with this matter, I may have to withdraw our troops, for it is even now almost impossible to protect the trains going to and fro. Those Indians are only nominally friendly, and for buffalo robes can buy the best carbines, revolvers, and guns of all kinds with the ammunition to match. It is absurd to suppose a trader, who makes money by each sale, and generally much profit by Indian wars will be prudent in their sales, and I call your attention to the fact that the commissioned agents, who might be construed as to have some interest in the peace of the frontier — have surrendered all control of the matter to the licensed traders.

I beg you will show this and its enclosures to the President with this conclusion of mine — that the trader for a profit of ten dollars, the pistol, will involve us in a war that will cost the

treasury millions of dollars. I was aware that the Indians were getting arms in dangerous quantities, but presumed they purchased of passing teamsters, but now I see that one department of our National Government is arming them at the expense of life, and at great cost to another department of the same government. The very traders and agents who signed this paper are now appealing for our scanty quarters at Fort Larned, deeming it prudent to move from the Agency at Zarah from the very Indians named in their "permit" to sell arms.<sup>67</sup>

The accusations made by General Sherman in this letter were not based on rumors or false reports, as might be supposed, but as he affirms, on well authenticated proof. On January 13, of the same year, Major Douglas, commanding at Fort Dodge, addressed a report to the assistant Adjutant-general of the Military Division of the Missouri, in which he complained that the issue and sale of arms and ammunition, such as breech-loading carbines, and revolvers with powder and lead, continued without interruption. He said that Butterfield had sold several cases of arms to the Cheyenne and Arapahoe; and that Charles Rath, another trader who lived at Zarah, armed several bands of Kiowa with revolvers and completely overstocked them in powder. He further complained that the Indians were so well armed that they had boasted that if trouble came in the Spring they would be ready for it. It was also his opinion

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<sup>67</sup> Letter, Sherman to Grant, accompanying Annual Report, Department of Texas, 1867—On file in Old Records Section, Adjutant-general's Office, War Department, Washington.

that the Indian Agents were in league with the traders in these practices.<sup>68</sup>

Captain Ashbury, located at Fort Larned, Kansas, in a letter to the Adjutant-general on January 4, 1867, made very much the same charge, and asserted that all the traders were engaged in this kind of trading with the hostile tribes.<sup>69</sup>

Shortly following his acquaintance with these irregular affairs, General Sherman issued orders to his post commanders to restrict the sale of arms and ammunition to the friendly tribes, and then only to the amount necessary for the Indians to kill their game supply. However, even this policy was criticized by those who lived on the frontier since it was maintained that the Indians always used the bow and arrow for such purposes.<sup>70</sup> Even with the restricted sales as ordered by General Sherman it was not possible to stop entirely this unholy practice of selling guns and ammunition to the Indians.

Not only did the dishonest traders living north of the Red River give trouble to the people of the Southwest, but those living in New Mexico as well proved to be very objectionable in their practices.

<sup>68</sup> N. Douglas to assistant Adjutant-general, Division of the Missouri, 115-M-1867, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>69</sup> H. Ashbury to assistant Adjutant-general, Division of the Missouri, MS., in *loc. cit.*

<sup>70</sup> This assertion was made by a correspondent of the *Austin Daily Republican*, December 5, 1868.



When A. B. Norton arrived in this territory in 1866 to take charge of his work as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, he found that an unrestricted trade, involving thousands of cattle which were driven from Texas by the Comanche, was being carried on.<sup>71</sup> Norton stated that the "territory was filled with Texas cattle."<sup>72</sup> With these conditions existing, he immediately gave orders for the cancellation of all trade permits and forbade any one to trade with these Indians unless they had a license duly signed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington. This by no means put a stop to the illicit traffic, for the Commissioner granted licenses to four different citizens who sublet their privileges to others until matters were as bad as before.<sup>73</sup> Norton, in speaking of conditions at a later time said: "When no cattle or horses are found in the Comanche camp by the Mexican traders, they lend the Indians their pistols and horses and remain at camp until the Comanches have time to go to Texas and return, and get the stock they desire."

An attempt of Agent Labadi at Santa Fé to bring this hostile tribe under reservation restrictions was of no avail. In 1867 he set out toward the east from Santa Fé for the purpose of delivering a

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<sup>71</sup> Report of Superintendent Norton in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1867-1868, part 1, 194.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> John Hitson, in writing to the *San Antonio Daily Express*, on February 27, 1873, put the loss in cattle during the two preceding decades at 100,000 head.



demand that these Indians give up Rudolph Fisher, who had been recently stolen by them, and any other captives they might have. The Indians met Labadi at a place called Ontaque, near the Texas border, and when the latter demanded that the Indians give up their prisoners and cease their depredations on Texas, they feigned surprise, claiming that the military officers had encouraged them to depredate on this state by saying that Texas was making war on the federal government and therefore must be reduced to submission.<sup>74</sup> They promised that they would cease their depredations and that if Labadi would meet them in the following October at the full of the moon, they would take up with him the surrendering of prisoners, saying that their chiefs were away on the warpath at that time and that they would be able to take no action on this matter until they returned. Agent Labadi said that at that time "eighteen expeditions were then under way against Texas." Though the agent pronounced these Indians "good at heart" in the same paragraph in which he expressed this opinion he said that "they have Texas cattle without number, and almost every day bring in more."<sup>75</sup>

General Augur, commanding the Department of Texas in 1872, in commenting on this irregular trade between New Mexico cattle thieves and Comanche Indians, said: "The western line is ex-

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<sup>74</sup> Report of Agent Labadi, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1867-1868, part i, no. 57.

<sup>75</sup> Report of Superintendent A. B. Norton, *ibid.*, 195.

posed to outrages from the bands of Indians living permanently in Mexico and others who make Mexico a base of operations against frontier settlements, and by short lines a refuge from pursuit and market for their plunder. . . . In addition to these outrages the frontier is also subjected to the inroads of organized cattle thieves from New Mexico on the western line.”<sup>76</sup>

This intolerable situation was brought to a climax when on March 25, 1872, Sergeant Wilson, in charge of Company I, Fourth Cavalry, was sent out from Fort Concho in pursuit of a supposed band of Indians. He overtook the marauders and engaged them in a spirited skirmish in which he captured one of their number. The prisoner, to the surprise of the soldiers, proved to be a Mexican lad of seventeen or eighteen years of age. In giving an account of himself, he said that he was one of about fifty men from New Mexico who were employed to come to Texas for the purpose of stealing cattle. He gave the name of his employer and the wages he received. He mentioned the camps of Indians on the road between Texas and New Mexico and said that the Indians were working in conjunction with his band. Under compulsion, he related his experiences from the date of his connection with this enterprise to the day of his capture. He told the surprised soldiers that the stealing of Texas cattle had been a lucrative business for his

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<sup>76</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, Department of Texas, 1872*, p. MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

employers. In connection with this point he stated, what was hardly credited at the time, that there was a wagon road across the plains with plenty of permanent water and grass and that all the stolen cattle were driven over it to New Mexico.<sup>77</sup>

When a report of this amazing story was brought to the attention of General Augur, he directed that steps be taken immediately to verify it. A party was sent out from Fort Concho, with the Mexican boy going along as guide, and on the headwaters of the Colorado River evidences were found where horses and cattle had been driven that way, just as the guide had previously stated.<sup>78</sup>

With a view of breaking up this cattle stealing and stopping the incursions of hostile Indians along this part of the frontier, in May, of the same year, Colonel Mackenzie, with a part of the Fourth Cavalry, was ordered to establish a camp of cavalry and infantry on the "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos," from which his troops could operate in pursuit of these raiders.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, in vol. 205, pp. 58-59, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* It is not known where this camp was found though it was said to be about sixty miles above Fort Concho.

<sup>79</sup> The name of this stream is misleading. In 1869, Major Brown, with a small detachment of troops from Fort Concho, while scouting in the plains' region, found a fresh water stream west of the Double Mountains which was not indicated on the available maps. He designated it "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos," thinking that it was one of the forks of the Brazos River. The stream, however, had been previously discovered by Captain Marcy on his trip across the plains and named Catfish Creek, because of the abundance of catfish found in it. For an interesting account of the Major Brown expedition cf. *ibid.*,

Colonel Mackenzie started out with the Mexican as his guide, and in his operations discovered the road which the lad had spoken of. Its appearance indicated that large herds of cattle had passed over it, though because of recent rains, it was impossible to judge how long before. Colonel Mackenzie determined to follow it in order to find its terminus and if possible to recover some of the cattle.<sup>80</sup> It led him directly across the plains and along the route he found plenty of grass and water, as far as Almagordo, New Mexico. After striking the settlements the road gradually broke up into small trails which promised no results from further advance. He endeavored to find those charged by the guide as being engaged in the traffic of stealing cattle but they had found safety in flight. It is probable that their decision to leave New Mexico was also stimulated by the attitude of the irate citizens of that neighborhood who having heard of this illegitimate business thus carried on had aided the peace officers in making several arrests.<sup>81</sup>

On his return to Texas General Mackenzie took the route from Fort Bascom to the headwaters of the Red River, and thence to the camp on the "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos." Of these two

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145, and for location of stream see Rock and Smith's *Southern and Western Texas Guide for 1878* (frontispiece).

<sup>80</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur*, commanding Department of Texas, 1869, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

routes, General Mackenzie said: "This route has permanent and excellent water across the plains and no distance of more than thirty miles between water, all the water runs into the Red River. The Palo Duro trail has permanent spring water. There is good water and grass by both routes, they being in almost every respect better than the Pecos trail, and could be made safe to legitimate cattle drivers."<sup>82</sup>

In respect to the irregular practices of the Indian agents and traders, General Sheridan pronounced them a "notorious fraud." This statement was nearer the truth than a majority of the people at that time were aware of. Irregularities of Indian agents and traders were frequently revealed by both citizens and government officers having relations with the frontier.

For a time it was difficult to prove to the Nation that the many rumors concerning the dishonesty of Indian traders and thieves were true, but when these rumors became more and more persistent many demands were made on members of congress that they be investigated. As a result of such an investigation, an interesting situation was found to exist at Fort Sill in what is commonly known as the "Belknap Scandal."<sup>83</sup>

On March 2, 1876, Mr. Clymer of Pennsylvania,

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* The trail followed by General Mackenzie came to be known as the Mackenzie Trail and was used by cattle drivers quite freely after the settlement of the Indian troubles. This road is shown in Pressler and Laragerman's *Map of Texas*, 1879.

<sup>83</sup> These post traders were not necessarily Indian traders, though



Chairman of the committee on expenditures in the War Department, caused a sensation in the House of Representatives by submitting a report of his committee to the House in which he charged "that they found at the very threshold of their investigation such evidence of the malfeasance in office by General William W. Belknap, then Secretary of War, that they find it their duty to lay the same before the House."<sup>84</sup> Acting on the findings made by this committee the House preferred charges before the Senate against the Secretary of War, on March 2 of the same year.

As soon as Belknap was informed that impeachment charges were impending against him, on the same day his resignation was tendered to and accepted by President Grant.<sup>85</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that he had vacated his office the trial was gotten under way after considerable time had been spent in trying to determine whether congress had jurisdiction in the case.

The testimony bearing on the case was of an alarming nature. For the first time it incriminated the Secretary of War in these activities of the dishonest post traders in the West.

Under a circular letter of the War Department they usually carried on an extensive traffic with them either directly or through agents.

<sup>84</sup> *Proceedings of the Senate Sitting for the Trial of William W. Belknap, Late Secretary of War, on the Articles of Impeachment Exhibited by the House of Representatives*, 44th Cong., 1st sess., I.

<sup>85</sup> When General Sherman heard of the accusation against the Secretary of War and his resignation he said that he was surprised to learn that Belknap was a dishonest man because he had proven to be



of August 22, 1867, departmental commanders were authorized to grant unlimited permission to post traders to open establishments on military reservations for trading purposes in order to accommodate the soldiers and Indians, who could not readily travel to distant towns for such purposes, and to encourage the settlement of white immigrants thereon. In accordance with this circular John S. Evans secured permission to establish a trading-post at Fort Sill. He met with such a large measure of success in this mercantile venture that he made extensive improvements by way of additional housing facilities, a varied stock of goods, etc. Just at the time that he was planning a more comprehensive trading program, he was told that it would be necessary to secure a new permit from the Secretary of War since section 22 of the army appropriation bill for July 15, 1870, had transferred the right of making such appointments from the post commanders to the Secretary of War. In compliance with this advice Evans applied to the Secretary of War, William W. Belknap, for said right, stating in his application that he had recently spent \$80,000 in making improvements, buying new goods, etc., believing at the time that his tradership was of a permanent character, and that to vacate his position at this time would bring financial ruin on him.<sup>86</sup> Accompanying this letter

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a brave officer during the Civil War. *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, II, 454.

<sup>86</sup> *Proceedings of the Senate Sitting for the Trial of William W.*

was an endorsement from all the officers, including a special recommendation from General Grierson, stationed at the post.<sup>87</sup>

Some time before Belknap received this application, Mrs. Belknap had visited in the home of Caleb P. Marsh, a New York merchant, who had formed a close friendship with Mrs. Marsh. While here she became ill and was forced to remain in the home of her friend for some time. Feeling under obligations to her friends, Mrs. Belknap suggested to Marsh that he apply for a post tradership in the West as such positions were quite lucrative. Marsh was at first hesitant about accepting such an offer but when Mrs. Belknap insisted, telling him that it was in the power of her husband to confer such rights, he promised that if she would use her influence with the Secretary of War he would apply.<sup>88</sup> This she agreed to do, and

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*Belknap, Late Secretary of War, on the Articles of Impeachment Exhibited by the House of Representatives*, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 455.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 624. The names of nineteen officers were affixed to the endorsement, ranging in rank from Second Lieutenant to Brevet Lieutenant-colonel. This made the attitude of the Secretary of War all the more suspicious in the dismissal of Evans. This was not the first time, however, that Belknap had dismissed a worthy post trader. Mr. Ward, a post trader, at Fort Laramie, was removed shortly before this time, and in this act the Secretary of War took unto himself authority which belonged to General Sherman. This being the case the trader was restored to his post after Sherman had informed Secretary Belknap in no uncertain terms that he had transgressed on his authority. When the right to appoint traders was transferred to the Secretary, he again dismissed the unlucky trader. For details of this interesting case see *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, II, 455.

<sup>88</sup> *Proceedings of the Senate Sitting for the Trial of William W. Belknap, Late Secretary of War, on Articles of Impeachment Exhibited by the House of Representatives*, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 769.

upon her return to Washington she importuned Secretary Belknap to issue the tradership. This the Secretary agreed to do and Marsh was invited to come to Washington and make his application.

At the time the application of Marsh was pending the Secretary had also before him the application of Evans for reappointment. It does not appear from the testimony in the case whether the Secretary entered into an agreement with Marsh to extort from Evans any amount, in order to allow him to retain his post, but it was revealed in the testimony that it was at the suggestion of the Secretary that Marsh approached Evans for the purpose of making some kind of a satisfactory agreement.<sup>89</sup>

In negotiations with Evans, now thoroughly alarmed over the prospects of losing his trading right, Marsh demanded \$20,000 per year for the vacation of his rights. Evans would not agree to pay this much; so after considerable debate over terms, Marsh finally agreed to accept \$12,000 annually, with the understanding that such amount was to be paid in equal quarterly installments.<sup>90</sup>

As a result of this agreement between Evans and Marsh the former was to succeed the latter as post trader, having all the rights going with that office.

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* The charge of the prosecution was that since the Secretary had been informed by Evans that he had invested \$80,000 in improvements, etc., he deliberately used this leverage on him to extort a bribe.

<sup>90</sup> The agreement was originally \$15,000 but Evans became alarmed upon a rumor that forces at the post were to be reduced, so the final understanding was that the annual sum was to be \$12,000 to begin with and that this was to be reduced or raised in proportion to the withdrawal or addition of troops at that place.

In view of the agreement Marsh recommended the reappointment of Evans, withdrawing his own name in the meantime. The Secretary acted favorably on the recommendation and the reappointment of Evans was duly made.

Upon the receipt of the first payment from Evans, in accordance with their agreement, Marsh sent to Mrs. Belknap \$1500, or one-half of it, but in December of the same year, 1870, Mrs. Belknap died and after this time the payments were made to the Secretary of War.<sup>91</sup> Marsh testified before the committee that these payments were continued for a period of eighteen months or two years and then were reduced to \$6000 as a result of withdrawal of troops from the fort and complaints of those stationed there concerning extortionate prices which the post trader had been compelled to ask.

After the contract had been awarded to Evans, the Secretary of War issued an order giving him sole rights at Fort Sill. About the same time Evans formed a partnership with a Mr. Fisher in order to handle more efficiently his increasing business. In selling their goods it was necessary to charge abnormal prices to meet the Marsh agreement and have a margin of profit left. As a result of this state of affairs, those at the fort who had to buy from the traders raised a serious complaint that they paid exorbitant prices for their goods. The traders assured them that it was necessary to sell their

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<sup>91</sup> Secretary Belknap later married Mrs. Bower, sister of his deceased wife.

goods above the usual price since they were paying the Secretary of War and Caleb P. Marsh \$12,000 for agent rights. When this reason was first given to some of the officers it was hardly credited, but when it became known that other irregularities were reported at different posts and in the Indian country, more credence was stimulated in such reports. On February 16, 1872, the *New York Tribune* carried a sensational account dated "Washington, Thursday, February 15, 1872," giving all the salient facts in this irregular affair, and in addition thereto, the significant statement that "I am informed by officers who are stationed at Camp Supply that Lee and Reynolds paid \$10,000 outright for the same exclusive privilege there. Other cases are talked of but not corroborated by me. . . ." The author of this statement was not made known at that time, but was subsequently found to be General W. B. Hazen.

The publication of this article caused quite a stir, particularly in military circles, and with other rumors of corrupt practices among traders in the West then floating about, led to more and more insistent demands for an investigation, until finally in 1876 the committee on expenditures in the War Department made the report previously referred to.

Though the Secretary of War resigned upon receipt of news that impeachment charges were pending, nevertheless he was tried before the Senate on the accusation of "high crimes and misde-



meanors while in office.”<sup>92</sup> Before this was done, however, it was generally believed that the Senate could not convict him on the ground of “no jurisdiction” in that the Secretary automatically became a private citizen as soon as the President accepted his resignation. This point of view was also evidenced by the Senate in the trial, and though a majority of the senators present voted to convict him on the charge as made, a two-thirds majority could not be mustered with the result that Belknap was freed.

Although no basis in this affair was found to incriminate the Secretary of War with irregular Indian trading other than at Fort Sill, and numerous rumors of similar incidents elsewhere, it is not entirely improbable that it did exist. The guilt and careless indifference of the Secretary of War in the Fort Sill affair undoubtedly encouraged the lawless traders and Indian agents to be more bold in their irregular relations with the Indians on the remote frontier. In looking at this period from the perspective of the twentieth century there is no doubt of the low plane of morality on our western frontier. To put it mildly, it did not tend to encourage the wild savages to adopt a civilization fostered by a race which did not carry out its teachings.

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<sup>92</sup> *Proceedings of the Senate Sitting for the Trial of William W. Belknap, Late Secretary of War, on Articles of Impeachment Exhibited by the House of Representatives, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 4.*



## The Defensive Policy



## The Defensive Policy

The white people taking up the unoccupied lands on the frontier after the Civil War were dismayed to find that the establishment of these posts did not afford them peace and security. Here was to be found a far-flung frontier of thirteen hundred miles, open to depredations of the Indians and white outlaws. The border people were helpless to prevent the constant incursions directed against them. When it became evident that the federal authorities could not prevent raids under its defensive policy, the settlers attempted to help themselves. Unaccustomed as they were to border warfare and savage cunning, their feeble attempts to defend themselves were pitifully futile.<sup>93</sup>

Usually when news spread through the frontier settlements that the savages were pillaging the county, before a posse of settlers could be assembled and equipped to follow them up, the Indians would be well out of reach of any such punitive expedition. The blow from the marauders would fall suddenly, then without a moment's loss of time, the stolen stock would be driven from the country. The quickness with which this was done was be-

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<sup>93</sup> The general impression that the people of the frontier were well acquainted with all phases of Indian warfare does not seem to be substantiated from documentary sources.

cause of the fact that the Indians were mounted on swift, agile ponies, and in addition thereto, knew every hill, valley and plain intervening between their camping grounds and the settlements. Their knowledge of the character of the country over which they had to drive their stolen stock gave them every advantage in making a successful escape. Under these conditions even the soldiers, fairly well trained in border warfare, were no match for the savages when it came to pitting their skill against that of the latter. Much less then, could the settlers be expected to protect themselves from such raids against a foe who through generations of such warfare, were without doubt proficient in carrying out such marauding enterprises.<sup>94</sup> These bold tactics of the Indians, it seemed, were partially intuitive; being trained for generations in such warfare, the inherited tendencies seemed to influence them to a large extent.

Undoubtedly one cause of the delay in sending federal forces to the frontier immediately following the Civil War was the belief on the part of the federal officials that troops were needed more in the interior of the state in preserving what were termed "the rights of the Freedmen." A very bitter

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<sup>94</sup> The number of losses from Indian depredations was appalling. The messages of the Governors, Reports of the Attorney-general, and other state officers, together with accounts in newspapers, magazines, state almanacs and federal reports indicate the alarming situation during this period. The seriousness of these depredations is frequently referred to by various sources such as that found in the *Flake's Daily Bulletin*, Galveston, November 16, 1866, which calls attention to raids in the vicinity of Austin.

controversy was precipitated when J. W. Throckmorton, Governor of the state, took issue with General Phil Sheridan on this point. This notable dispute was incident to the passage of a frontier defense act by the Texas Legislature on September 22, 1866. It should be remembered in this connection that Civil War antipathies were still very strong, and it was difficult for General Sheridan to look upon any such move on the part of the state without a great deal of suspicion.

The act provided for the raising of three battalions of Texas Rangers for the protection of the northern and western frontiers of the state "to consist of ten companies, giving to two battalions three and to one battalion, four companies; and to consist of one Captain, two Lieutenants, four Sergeants, four Corporals, one Bugler, one Farrier, and eighty-seven privates each."<sup>95</sup> The act further provided that the field and staff officers should consist of one Colonel, one Lieutenant-colonel, one Major, one assistant Adjutant-general, with rank of Captain, and Adjutant with rank of First Lieutenant, one Surgeon with rank of Major, and three assistant Surgeons with rank of Captain. These troops were to be furnished with all the necessary equipment as the Colonel and military commander of the district might agree upon.<sup>96</sup>

So urgent was the necessity for immediate action that on September 26 of the same year, Governor

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<sup>95</sup> 40 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Ex. Docs. no. 74*, p. 20.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

Throckmorton telegraphed President Johnson, calling attention to the rapid depopulation taking place on the frontier because of Indian depredations. He mentioned the fact that unless assistance was rendered by the United States government he was authorized by the Texas legislature to call out one thousand volunteers for duty on the frontier. This force was to be placed under the control and at the disposition of the general government for such time as might be required.<sup>97</sup>

Three days later the Governor wrote an urgent letter to the Secretary of War, Stanton, asking him to transfer troops from the interior of the state, where they were used in suppressing outbreaks between the whites and blacks, and place them on the frontier. Concerning the situation on the frontier, he said: "The frontier is suffering great devastation, murder, rapine, and the most revolting outrages are of daily occurrence." Then sounding a desperate note in his appeal, the Governor wrote: "Unless the Government will send efficient and immediate protection, the State will be compelled to undertake it without a dollar in the State treasury to defray the necessary expenses."<sup>98</sup>

This appeal found a measure of response with the Secretary of War for in the course of a letter to General Sheridan, at that time commanding the Fifth Military District, of which Texas was a part, he said:

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*



The representations of Governor Throckmorton and the statement that he transmits deeply impress the President with the obligation and necessity of affording relief and protection to the people of Texas from Indian outrages to the utmost extent within the power of the Federal Government; and he is of the opinion that if troops stationed in the interior can be advantageously employed for that purpose on the frontier, it should be promptly done.<sup>99</sup>

In regard to Governor Throckmorton's appeal for troops to protect the frontier, General Sheridan said: "During the last six months, Indian depredations have taken place on the remote frontier. Their extent is not defined as yet, but they are not very alarming, and I think that the Governor, to some extent, has been influenced by exaggerated reports gotten up, in some instances by frontier people, to get a market for their products, and in other instances by army contractors to make money." Then voicing the opinion which seemingly dominated the majority of federal officials in the state at this time, he said: "It is strange that if a white man is killed by the Indians on an extensive frontier, the greatest excitement will take place, but over the killing of many freedmen in the settlements, nothing is done."<sup>100</sup> He stated further that such troops as would be raised by the state would be of such an element as fought against the Union during the war just closed, and that being true, he implied

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of the Gulf, 1866*, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. Sheridan was mistaken in his point of view and recognized his error a short time later, as will be indicated further on in this discussion.

that this might offer a serious embarrassment to the government in using state forces. In this same letter he said that he had transferred the Fourth Cavalry to Texas to answer the purpose of such troops, indicating clearly that he did not care to be bothered with the state forces and that they should not be offered by the Governor.

Probably one reason for this point of view on the part of General Sheridan was a report of Major Forsyth who had been sent to the frontier to investigate conditions there and report back to the General. The report which was finally sent to the commander of the district was entirely in harmony with the opinion which General Sheridan gave voice to as herein noted. Concerning the situation here, he said: "I am convinced that many of the people who are moving in from the frontier are doing so to better their condition and not from any fear that they may have from the Indians."<sup>101</sup> In support of his theory he said that instead of stopping at the first well settled county, the fleeing frontiersmen pushed into the interior of the state near a railroad where they would have a market for their products. He further stated that all this clamor for protection was for political purposes.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> It is not known whether Forsyth was sincere in his belief herein expressed, but certain it is that he was not justified in such a conclusion because of his own observations, since he had gone no closer to the frontier than Waco, Texas, one hundred miles east of the frontier line of settlements.

<sup>102</sup> Reconstruction prejudice is clearly evident in these false representations made by Major Forsyth. The reasons ascribed to the fron-

The helpless condition of the frontier during this period is hardly paralleled by a similar experience in the history of the West. One characteristic of the situation is brought out in the following notice which appeared in the *Austin Daily Republican* during the period referred to:

#### TAKEN BY THE INDIANS

Taken from my home by the Indians in Legion valley, Llano County, Texas, February 5, 1868, my son, Lee Temple Friend, age eight years; black eyes, light hair, and fair complexion; also my neighbor's daughter, Malinda Claude, age seven, blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair. All Indian agents or traders, or any person having an opportunity, are requested to rescue the above mentioned children; and delivering them to me or notifying me of their whereabouts, will be liberally remunerated. Arizona and New Mexico papers, please copy. Feb. 22.

JOHN S. FRIEND<sup>103</sup>

When it is remembered that such experiences occurred many times on the frontier,<sup>104</sup> and that no end was in sight for the cessation of such savagery tiersmen for their flight toward the eastern settlements were puerile and unfounded.

<sup>103</sup> *Austin Daily Republican*, June 1, 1868.

<sup>104</sup> Lieutenant A. C. Hill, of the state Ranger force, writing from the frontier to the *San Antonio Daily Express*, January 18, 1871, said: "The sight of hundreds of lone chimneys now standing on the frontier from the Rio Grande to the Red River; the greatest number of decaying fences and houses; and houses in this vicinity stained with blood of men, women and children of all ages, is truly a shame to any nation on earth." As a class, these Rangers on the Texas frontier were as bold warriors as ever defended a frontier, and saved the state much of the horror and raids incident to hostile Indian activities which came to other frontiers of the Southwest.

as brought them about, apparently the frontiersmen were well justified in their vigorous demands for protection from the federal government. *The Waco Register* of April 21, 1866, carried an account of a visit made to the frontier by some of its citizens. In speaking of the conditions found there these observers stated that the "Indians seemed to swarm all through the country—mostly Comanches," and that not more than one-fifth of the old ranches were occupied. They well expressed the true situation when they said that "the country seemed to be in a desperate condition indeed." Although this visit was made to the frontier in 1866, the same condition prevailed in 1871 when General Sherman visited the frontier posts. Inspector-general Marcy, who accompanied General Sherman on this trip, confided to his journal that "this rich and beautiful section does not contain today as many white people as it did when I visited it eighteen years ago."<sup>105</sup> Still another observer, who visited the border about the same time, complained that "the whole of the frontier line of counties of the state west of Grayson County has been, for the past four years, subject to the inroads of the Indians during the fall of each year." He further stated that prior to the Civil War, the population of Jack County, Texas, was fourfold what it was at that time, and that the settlements had been

<sup>105</sup> "Extracts from Inspector-general Marcy's Journal of an Inspection tour while accompanying the General in Chief (Sherman) during the months of April, May, and June, 1871." MS., in *Semi-Official Letters of W. T. Sherman, 1866-1871*.

deserted because of the increased dangers from the Indians.<sup>106</sup>

A short time following his controversy with Governor Throckmorton, General Sheridan perceived that he had been misinformed concerning the conditions on the frontier. He became dismayed at the boldness and destructiveness with which Indian raids were carried out in this region, and therefore determined to punish the marauders. Thus, while the remainder of the Southwestern frontier was on the defensive, Sheridan carried out a vigorous offensive against the Indians in the winter of 1868. Texas at this time was in the Fifth Military District and was not under the charge of General Sheridan, who commanded the Military District of Missouri; consequently the aggressive campaign carried out did not comprehend the whole of the Southwest.

Following the treaty of Medicine Lodge, numerous complaints of Indian depredations were made by the frontier settlers in Kansas, Indian Territory, Missouri, Colorado, and Texas. When the savages were reminded of the promises which they had made to cease depredating on the white people, the young braves replied that they had never agreed to cease depredations; that such promises were made by the old chiefs and other Indian leaders who had been deliberately deceived

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<sup>106</sup> Circular No. 4, S.G.O., War Department, December 5, 1870—*Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Description of Military Posts*, 191.



by the peace commissioners who had promised not only annuities but also guns and ammunition. To reconcile these disgruntled warriors and to explain more fully the treaty stipulations, General Sheridan sent among them special agents.<sup>107</sup> For a time it seemed that the work of these agents would end in success but when the spring of 1868 came, General Sheridan was dismayed to learn that the Indians had rejected all overtures and scattered in all directions preparatory to hostile depredations on white settlements.

In July an attack was made by the Cheyenne on a friendly tribe of Kiowa living near Council Grove, Kansas, and the homes of several white people living nearby were robbed. Following this incident the Comanche and Kiowa came to Fort Larned, Kansas, to receive their annuities, and when the agent did not give them arms and ammunition, which they demanded, the Indians refused to accept the annuities offered them and returned to their camps and gave themselves up to war dances.<sup>108</sup> So threatening was the attitude of the savages that Brevet Brigadier-general Alfred Sully, commanding the district of the Arkansas, called upon the head chiefs to explain their actions.

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<sup>107</sup> Abner S. Glover and William Comstock were sent among the Cheyenne, the most warlike of all these southern tribes, who at that time were camping on the headwaters of the Pawnee and Walnut creeks; Richard Parr was sent among the Comanche and Kiowa of the south. These three men were under the command of Lieutenant Buckner, who was instructed by General Sheridan to make peace with the Indians.

<sup>108</sup> *Personal Memoirs of General P. H. Sheridan*, II, 288.



The latter protested that the dissatisfaction was to be found among the younger warriors and that if the arms and ammunition were given to them, which had been promised, all would be well. General Sully committed the fatal mistake of complying with their request, and almost immediately thereafter the Indians broke out in open revolt.<sup>109</sup> General Sully then organized a force and went out against them, but he met with such determined resistance that he was forced to withdraw to Fort Larned for protection.<sup>110</sup>

This affair was the beginning of general hostilities on the part of the Comanche, Kiowa, Arapahoe and Cheyenne.<sup>111</sup> The combined strength of these tribes amounted to about six thousand warriors, and from the Texas settlements on the south to those of Kansas on the north, these blood-thirsty warriors, in large and small bands, pillaged the settlements. In the severe engagements between the federal troops and the Indians, over one hundred of the latter were killed. One of the most noteworthy of these preliminary affairs was a fight on the Republican River on September 17, 1868, between Colonel George A. Forsyth, with a detachment of citizen scouts – forty-seven men and three officers – who were expert rifle shots, and a party

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<sup>109</sup> With these arms they were able to wage quite an effective war, both north and south of the Red River.

<sup>110</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, 278 ff.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 304. General Sheridan said in this connection that "the principal mischief makers were the Cheyenne. Next in deviltry were the Kiowas, and then the Arapahoes and Comanches."

of about seven hundred Cheyenne and Sioux. This small band of troops, being surrounded, took refuge on a small island in the river and held off the Indians for four days until they were relieved by Colonel Bankhead and a force of federal troops.<sup>112</sup>

So flagrantly did the Indians violate the treaty of Medicine Lodge, and so apparently were they at fault in this outbreak, that General Sheridan decided to wage a winter campaign against them, giving them no rest until they were severely chastised, and until they were brought to see that the military authorities were not to be trifled with in their efforts to bring to them a just peace.<sup>113</sup>

General Getty<sup>114</sup> was instructed to organize a force at Fort Bascom, New Mexico, and General Eugene Carr was to organize another on the Arkansas River, while a third, under the supervision of General Sheridan, was to concentrate at the junction of Beaver Creek and the Canadian River. By the middle of November these three columns had been organized and General Sheridan arrived at Camp Supply to take personal command over all the operations.<sup>115</sup>

The force advancing from Fort Bascom, under Colonel A. W. Evans, consisting of five hundred

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 304-306.

<sup>113</sup> From June, 1862 to 1869, no less than 800 men, women and children had been killed on the frontier, cf. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1869, p. 41, for Sheridan's estimate.

<sup>114</sup> This officer commanded the district of New Mexico.

<sup>115</sup> General Sheridan said that he took personal command since the campaign was an experimental one, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1869 (Abridgement), 42.

and sixty-three men, was to operate along the main Canadian — establishing a depot of supplies at Monument Creek; the force under General Eugene Carr, consisting of five companies of cavalry commanded by General Penrose, and the main column organized on the Arkansas, was to establish its depot on the headwaters of the North Canadian and to extend its operations toward the Antelope Hills and the headwaters of the Red River.<sup>116</sup> The main column, consisting of eleven companies of the Seventh Cavalry, twelve of the Third, and one company of the Thirty-eighth Infantry, was to strike the Indians on the headwaters of the Washita farther south. The movements of General Sheridan's force were temporarily held up because of the delay of the Kansas troops<sup>117</sup> in arriving, but as a trail of hostile Indians had been discovered near the camp, Colonel Custer was ordered to move out one regiment and follow it up, though a fearful snow-storm was raging at the time.<sup>118</sup> Colonel Custer acted with promptness, and the roving marauders, who proved to be a band of Cheyenne, were encountered in the battle of the Washita, on

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<sup>116</sup> In establishing the depot here for the main column, Camp Supply, which became an important post in the Indian country, came into existence. The other converging bodies of troops were termed "beaters in" and were not expected to accomplish much. *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> This was a force which the Governor of Kansas had sent to join the forces of General Sheridan. The people of this state were considerably aroused by the depredations of the hostile bands and demanded that the Governor take steps to punish them. In conformity with this demand the Governor raised and sent forward this volunteer force of troops.

<sup>118</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, 312-313.

November 27, 1868. Here the Cheyenne, under their chief, Black Kettle, were surprised and their entire village destroyed.<sup>119</sup> The engagement occurred just above the junction of the Sergeant Major Creek and the Washita. Most of the Arapahoe, Kiowa, Comanche and Apache were below the Cheyenne, forming the winter camps of the allied tribes. When the Kiowa saw the Cheyenne hard pressed, they made hostile demonstrations, as though about to attack the troops, who in turn attacked them and drove them back for a distance of five or six miles down the Washita.<sup>120</sup> Colonel Custer lost in this fight Major Elliott and fifteen men who were detached from the main column during the course of the engagement and massacred by the Indians.<sup>121</sup>

After the battle Colonel Custer returned with his column to Camp Supply, and as the Kansas troops had arrived by this time, Sheridan decided to move at once and strike the Kiowa and Comanche with his full force. The cold weather had not abated and the men, who had burrowed in the ground by digging small cellars, suffered intensely

<sup>119</sup> This band had recently been engaged in murderous forays on the Saline and Solomon rivers in Kansas. Wearing apparel and personal articles of the settlers slain by this band were found in their camp and on the bodies of the dead warriors after the fight. Cf. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1869* (Abridgement), p. 43; and also Sheridan's *Memoirs*, II, 316.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Colonel Custer did not know of their serious plight until it was too late to render aid. The slaying of this band was very much like the fate which befell the commanding officer himself six years later in the battle of the Little Big Horn.

as a result of exposure, but so anxious were they to strike the Indians a telling blow that on December 7 Sheridan moved his entire force down the Washita toward the winter camps of the hostile warriors. When the soldiers arrived at the scene of the previous encounter, the mangled bodies of Major Elliott and his men were found, and such was the spirit of the men that could the savages have been found, undoubtedly they would have fared badly. The Indians having heard of the approach of the troops had fled. A vigorous pursuit was immediately instituted with the result that on December 16, the main force of these hostile bands was overtaken and General Sheridan was preparing to attack them when he received word from General Hazen, who was head of the Peace Commission, that the Kiowa were on friendly terms with the government and should not be molested.<sup>122</sup> Though General Sheridan knew that they were not friendly, the Indians were not attacked when they promised to go on the reservation which had been provided for them by the treaty of Medicine Lodge.

The warlike demonstrations against them was sufficient to cause all of the hostile bands to be willing to come on their reservations, save one band under Woman-heart (Monyi-ten) which fled to the plains. Upon presenting themselves at Fort

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<sup>122</sup> The Indians had become aware of the proximity of the troops on the evening before the attack was planned and communicated with General Hazen by relaying their distress call. General Sheridan at a later time regretted that he did not attack as he at first planned to do.



Cobb, the Indians were settled in their reservations.

Meanwhile, General Carr was scouting along the main Canadian, west of Antelope Hills, and so effective were his efforts to follow up the hostile bands, that the Arapahoe and Cheyenne in that vicinity surrendered themselves and agreed to go on their reservation. The forces of General Evans were equally successful in demonstrating to the Indians with whom they came in contact, that their treaty agreements must be lived up to, and even the "Quahada" for a time submitted themselves to this officer at Fort Bascom.

In writing of the results of the campaign, General Sheridan said: "I am now able to report that there has been a fulfillment of all conditions which we had in view when we commenced our winter's campaign last November, namely: punishment was inflicted; property destroyed; the Indians disabused of the idea that winter would bring them security; and all the tribes south of the Platte forced on the reservations set apart for them by the government, where they are in tangible shape for good work of civilization, education, and religious instruction."<sup>128</sup>

Unfortunately this "rounding up" campaign did not include the vast frontier of Texas and New Mexico. Had this been the case, in all likelihood later troubles would have been averted, but the

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<sup>128</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Abridgement), 1869, p. 43.



policy pursued here was a defensive one. As an indication of this policy in Texas, from July 1 to December 31, 1867, there were twenty-six expeditions sent out from the various posts in the state against the Indians. Of this number fairly complete returns on twenty show an average of only thirty-three men for each scout, eight days for each trip, and an average of only one hundred and eighty-six miles for each expedition made. Naturally, the larger number of such expeditions did not come in contact with the plundering bands of Indians. The usual comments, in tabulating the results of these expeditions were "No Indians seen," or, "Abundant signs but no Indians seen." In the few engagements during this period but four savages were killed, seventy-six horses and six mules recaptured, over against more than ten times that many settlers killed, and thousands of their cattle and horses driven away by the warlike Indians.<sup>124</sup>

In the Texas forays, since the Comanche and Kiowa were not on the defensive, many times they charged the troops recklessly, even in the face of certain defeat. An encounter of this nature occurred in August, 1867, when a sergeant with ten men was escorting a pay-master from Fort Chadbourne to Fort Belknap. He was attacked by a large band of Indians and after a sharp engage-

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<sup>124</sup> For number of expeditions see "Tabular Statement of Scouts and Expeditions," accompanying Annual Report of General Reynolds, commanding Department of Texas, 1868; and for losses sustained by settlers see body of report, MS., on file in Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

ment the savages were driven off. Another instance of similar nature occurred on July 12, 1867, when a formidable attack was made on Buffalo Springs. The post was held by Lieutenant Matheny and twenty men of the Sixth Cavalry. The attackers were finally repelled with a loss of several killed and wounded. Still another instance of the boldness of the marauders occurred on July 12, 1869, when Brevet Major G. B. McClellan, with a scout of fifty men of the Sixth Cavalry, was attacked by two hundred and fifty Comanche near the north fork of the Little Wichita River, about fifty miles north of Fort Richardson. Major McClellan and his men fought them for several hours, retreating in an orderly manner, suffering a loss of two men killed and two wounded, and at the same time inflicting a serious loss on the savages.<sup>125</sup>

One of the most heroic actions engaged in by federal troops in this state during this period was on February 10, 1870, when Captain Marrow and six men of Company I, Twenty-fourth Infantry, were attacked at Mountain Pass, about seventeen miles south of the present town of Merkel, Texas, by a band of about seventy-five Comanche. Though outnumbered by more than ten to one, the plucky little band of soldiers repelled the attack after an hour of hard fighting. This was not done, however, before the Indians had driven off all the horses and

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<sup>125</sup> It was noticed by the troops that this band of Indians was armed with breech-loading carbines, in some instances superior to those which

mules which belonged to the El Paso Stage Company at that place. The Indians lost several killed and wounded in this fight without inflicting any casualties on the soldiers.<sup>126</sup>

Still another instance of the boldness of these savages during the "defensive policy" period was on May 23, 1872, when Captain E. M. Heyl, with one company of the Fourth Cavalry, was attacked while in camp in the vicinity of Lynn Creek in Lost Valley. While the troops were stopping for the night, about 11 P.M., a large war-party of Comanche made a dash on the horses which were staked out and "sidelined," and attempted to stampede them. Sentinels on duty, however, saw the advancing savages and fired upon them. As soon as the pickets aroused the sleeping soldiers, the Indians became aware that their presence was known and charged the camp, shooting and yelling as they came. When they saw the soldiers were well prepared for them, they retired from the field, having so wounded one of the soldiers that he died soon afterwards.<sup>127</sup> Captain Heyl sought to punish the savages for their boldness but before he could overtake them a drenching rain obliterated their trail,

they possessed. This was undoubtedly the result of the illicit trade carried on in arms and ammunition by the traders residing north of the Red River.

<sup>126</sup> The El Paso Stage Company maintained a stage station at this point. For account of the fight see *Post Returns of Fort Griffin*, July, 1869, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>127</sup> *Medical History of Fort Richardson*, May, 1872, *loc. cit.*

and the discomfited soldiers were forced to return to camp.<sup>128</sup>

So bold were these large bands of Indians raiding the Texas frontier that at times it was necessary for several of the frontier posts to coöperate in sending out expeditions to drive them from the frontier. Such an expedition was sent out on September 12, 1869, to scout the region of the headwaters of the Nueces, Llano, Concho, and the Clear and Salt forks of the Brazos. The force was made up of two companies of the Fourth Cavalry and five of the Ninth Cavalry – in all one hundred and sixty-nine men, under the command of Captain John M. Bacon. On the morning of October 28, while in bivouac on the "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos," the troops were attacked by a band of about five hundred Comanche and Kiowa warriors.<sup>129</sup> The severe engagement which followed was characterized by brilliant charges by the Indians and spirited counter charges by the troops. The attack was opened when the savages sought to capture the pack train which was guarded by Captain Smith and a detachment of troops which formed the left wing of the line. Smith held his ground and when the Indians began a withdrawal, his men charged among them, killing eight and wounding several others. Lieutenant Dawson with a detachment on the right, charged the retreating

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> The site of this engagement is on Catfish Creek in Crosby County, Texas.

Indians, killing and wounding thirty. After the fight had continued for some time, the Indians were finally driven from the field and were pursued for five or six miles.<sup>180</sup>

As a result of this engagement a Comanche Indian girl was captured of whom the Post Surgeon of Fort Concho said: "Lieutenant Abbott, with scarcely censurable discretion, brought a young squaw to the post with a view to her civilization and education; but as she has been under the hands of the Surgeon since her arrival for old organic diseases, his Samaritan views were probably frustrated, as the case of this month, the problem with the Post Surgeon is to get her to the nearest reservation."<sup>181</sup>

Due to the disturbed conditions of the frontier and the failure of the defensive policy of the federal government, a demand was made by the settlers that the Governor send forces to the border for their protection. At a called session of the Legislature on May 24, 1870, a joint resolution was approved, asking congress to prevent Mexico from harboring bands of Indians who devastated the southwestern portion of Texas. An act to provide for the defense of the frontier was approved on June 13, 1870, under which fourteen companies of Texas Rangers were to be raised and mustered into the service of the state. To give strength to this

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<sup>180</sup> *Post Returns of Fort McKavett*, November, 1869, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*



measure, a second act was approved on August 12, 1870, appropriating the sum of \$750,000 in state bonds for the payment of such troops as might be raised under the first act.<sup>182</sup>

Raids continued without abatement. Though both the state and federal forces were on the frontier, the Indians took advantage of the defensive attitude of the military authorities and continued their depredations. On July 8, 1870, an expedition consisting of thirty-seven men and two officers from the Fourth Cavalry, and ten Tonkaway scouts, sent out from Fort Griffin, came in contact with one of these hostile bands of Kiowa and Comanche warriors. A running fight ensued in which one Indian was killed and one hundred and fifty cattle recovered. Captain W. N. Rafferty, with one additional officer and twenty-two men from Company M of the Sixth Cavalry, and five Tonkaway scouts, from September 26 to October 7, 1870, covered one hundred and twenty-six miles on an expedition through Montague, Shackelford, and Jack counties. During this journey two Indians were killed and eighteen horses were recovered.<sup>183</sup>

In order to convince congress of the imperative need for federal protection, a joint resolution was passed by the Texas Legislature on March 25,

<sup>182</sup> For discussion of this measure see *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 1, 1870. The writer approved of the act in that it would bolster up the failing defensive policy of the federal government.

<sup>183</sup> *Annual Report* of the commander of the Fifth Military District, file 1140-A.G.O., 1870, MS., Old Records Section, War Department, Washington.



1871, asking congress to send a joint commission to the Texas frontier to investigate border depredations of the Indians and Mexicans. A joint resolution was also introduced, calling upon the Texas senators and representatives in the national congress to use their influence to effect the removal of bands of Comanche and Kiowa from the reservation north of the Red River, whence it was easy for the Indians to gain access to the frontier settlements,<sup>134</sup> to a point of at least one hundred and fifty miles from the settlements and organized counties of Texas. The resolution was adopted on April 6, 1871.<sup>135</sup>

During the second session of the legislature on November 25, 1871, another act was approved which provided for mustering into state service twenty-two additional companies of minutemen; and in his annual report of 1873, the Adjutant-general of the state said that there were armed and organized along the frontier, under the acts of November 25, 1871, and an act which was later approved on June 2, 1873, twenty companies of such troops for the defense of the border. While the state troops were being augmented to meet the danger of these increased depredations during the

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<sup>134</sup> The Wichita reservation was located in the southwestern corner of the Indian Territory. This location gave them a favorable position from which to project their hostile raids on the Texas frontier.

<sup>135</sup> A discussion of this resolution is found in a special report made by the Adjutant-general of Texas in 1884, outlining the destructiveness of Indian raids as a basis for claims for reimbursement of the state troops.

year 1871, scouts were kept continually in the field by the federal military authorities, seeking to turn back bands of warriors headed toward the settlements.<sup>136</sup> In order to facilitate troop movements, sub-posts were established at Fort Lancaster, Mayner's Creek, Camp Wood, Camp Hudson, Fort Chadbourne, and Phantom Hill.<sup>137</sup> Each of these sub-posts was garrisoned by a company of infantry and a detachment of cavalry, such garrisons being relieved monthly.<sup>138</sup> Scouts were sent out from these posts, and these, with the monthly changes of the garrisons, kept the country in their vicinity fairly well patrolled.

As an instance of such a patrol, Colonel W. R. Shafter,<sup>139</sup> with six officers and seventy-five men, went out from Fort Griffin in pursuit of Apache who had stolen mules from Company A of the Sixth Cavalry of that post. The Indians were overtaken on the Staked Plains and in a fight which followed, one of them was wounded and a squaw captured, but she later escaped. The mules were recovered, and the Indians in their flight, were forced to give up six months' supply of meat for

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<sup>136</sup> Activities of state forces are set forth in *Annual Report of the Adjutant-general of Texas*, 1873. The federal troops referred to here usually operated within a radius of only about seventy-five miles from the posts from which they were sent out.

<sup>137</sup> Ft. Chadbourne and Phantom Hill were also mail stations on the El Paso stage line.

<sup>138</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Texas*, 1871, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>139</sup> General W. R. Shafter of Spanish-American War fame gained considerable practical experience in campaigning against the hostile savages of the Southwest during this period.

six lodges, seventy-five bars of lead, powder, buffalo robes, saddles, and other materials used in camp. The expedition returned to the post in July, having covered four hundred and seventeen miles.<sup>140</sup>

One weakness of the defensive policy could be charged to the previously mentioned fact that the Indians were better acquainted with the geographical features of west Texas than were the United States forces. Whenever the savages were hard pressed, they took advantage of every physical contour of the surface of the earth which would favor them. Due to this fact, many expeditions sent against them were so arduous as to completely wear out both men and horses before any results could be attained.

Such was an expedition sent out from Fort Richardson on May 25, 1872, consisting of thirty men from Company G, Fourth Cavalry, under the command of Captain J. A. Wilcox. The trail of a band of Kiowa was struck eight miles southeast of the post and followed for about four miles when the company stopped for the night. Next morning at daybreak the chase was resumed and the trail followed for fourteen hours, the troops traveling seventy miles by dark. The following morning at daybreak the trail was once more taken up and

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<sup>140</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Texas, 1871*, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. Though the troops covered considerable ground in this expedition, it should be noticed that twenty days were consumed on it, or an average of but nineteen miles per day.

while the soldiers were hunting in a circuit of twenty miles, six shots were heard by the soldiers to the left, and moving objects were seen at a distance of three or four miles; the command started pursuit, and when they were within three hundred or four hundred yards thereof, a band of Indians showed themselves on a hill between the Big and Little Wichita rivers. The troops started after them at a gallop, chasing them for about thirty miles, over prairies, and up and down ravines, gulches and hills. The savages crossed the Big Wichita; the troops crossed after them; but the former reached a high elevation two miles distant where another party of warriors met them. It was deemed imprudent to follow them farther; therefore the troops recrossed the river and marched twenty miles to a camp.<sup>141</sup> This party of Indians was not the one which the soldiers had been trailing. The horses of the latter band were of Army stock and were "shod all around." On the following morning at daybreak, objects were seen at a distance, moving toward some timber about three miles away. The troops started after them on a run and found them to be Indians. They were chased on a dead run through the timber, up and down hills, for about nine hours when the Indians halted near a timbered ravine. The soldiers were scattered over two or three miles, some not being able to keep up with others, but notwithstanding the paucity of num-

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<sup>141</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Texas*, 1872, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

bers, the order was given for a charge, and the Indians were scattered in every direction. Due to the fact that in fleeing, each savage took a separate course, it was next to impossible to pick up the trail immediately. While the troops were hunting for the Indians in the vicinity of Buffalo Springs, they were ambushed and fired upon. One of the soldiers had his hat shot through, but without further harm. Some of the savages came running from their places of concealment, yelling and firing their guns. The soldiers returned the fire several times, and two Indians were seen to fall as though hit. Deeming it prudent to await the arrival of the remainder of his tired band, Captain Wilcox gave orders to fall back a short distance, and with the arrival of the remainder of the forces started toward the position of the savages, but when he arrived they had quietly slipped away. Since the soldiers were worn out from their extreme exertions to which they had been subjected on the expedition, the trail was given up and the tired troopers returned to the fort.<sup>142</sup>

The defensive policy was assailed from all quarters of the state. The *San Antonio Daily Express* of March 26, 1870, admitted that the federal government was doing all that it could but said that the system of defense was wrong, maintaining that to remain on the defensive was but to invite attack from the hostile warriors. Such criticisms were so

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<sup>142</sup> *Post Returns, Fort Richardson*, April, 1872. MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

evidently just that when the Texas Legislature asked for a more vigorous policy in bringing the bold savages to terms, the military authorities of the Southwest sought the President's consent to carry out a more aggressive policy toward the savages.



The Jacksboro Indian Affair of 1871



## The Jacksboro Indian Affair of 1871

For some time prior to 1871 reports were sent to General Sherman concerning the hostility of the Indians of the Southwest. It was hard for him to believe such accounts since it was supposed that these tribes were peacefully located on a reservation north of the Red River. In order to see for himself whether or not these reports were true, the General with a small bodyguard started on a tour of inspection of the Texas forts scattered along the frontier. He had just arrived at Fort Richardson, near the town of Jacksboro, Texas, when a band of Kiowa and Comanche, led by Satanta, Satank, Big Tree, and Eagle Heart made a raid near the fort.<sup>143</sup>

On May 17, 1871, a government contractor's wagon train, consisting of ten wagons, four mule teams, and one mule and horse team, was captured by this band of raiding Indians near Salt Creek, twenty-two miles from Fort Richardson.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> A previous article under this same title was written by the author for the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, January, 1926. As may be seen, however, by consulting the article mentioned, the treatment of the subject in this chapter is not quite so inclusive as that in the *Quarterly*.

<sup>144</sup> *Medical History of Fort Richardson*, in vol. 120, p. 217, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. The names of the teamsters killed were Nathaniel S. Long, John Mullens, James

One wagon-master and six teamsters were killed. One of these was tied to his wagon wheel and burned after being scalped. Thomas Brazeal, though wounded through the foot, made his escape to Jackboro and reported the affair.<sup>145</sup> The matter was immediately brought before the attention of General Sherman and he dispatched all the available men in companies A, D, E, and F, Fourth Cavalry, commanded by Brevet Major-general R. S. Mackenzie, under written instructions to pursue and punish them when found.<sup>146</sup>

Two days later General Sherman received a delegation of citizens from Jack and Parker counties asking for more protection, among whom were W. W. Duke, R. J. Winders, J. B. Robinson, W. M. McConnell, Peter Hart, and H. H. Gaines.<sup>147</sup> These gentlemen seemingly for the first time revealed to the General the real conditions in Texas and impressed on him the failure of the defensive policy adopted by the military. They informed him

Elliott, Samuel Elliott, M. J. Baxter, Jesse Bowman, and James Williams. Those who made their escape were Thomas Brazeal, R. A. Day, Charles Brady, Hobbs Carey, and Dick Motor. The train belonged to Captain Henry Warren. For names of slain cf. S. H. Dixon's *Romance and Tragedy of Texas History*, 318.

<sup>145</sup> When Brazeal reached the government post near Jacksboro he was so weak from the loss of blood that he was near complete physical exhaustion. For an interesting account of this affair, see *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1871, p. 502.

<sup>146</sup> *Special Orders, Fort Richardson*, May 18, 1871, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>147</sup> Wilbarger, *Indian Depredations in Texas*, 554. This delegation of citizens accompanied Sherman to Fort Sill in order to recover horses and cattle which the Indians had stolen from them.

that unless some drastic step was taken at once the whole of the western part of the state would be depopulated. General Sherman listened to them attentively and then promised to correct the evils existing in the federal military policy in so far as it was possible. On the following morning he left Fort Richardson for Fort Sill, where he arrived without any mishap.

Laurie Tatum, agent for the Wichita Reserve, in writing on a later date concerning this incident, said that General Sherman called at his office on May 23, 1871, immediately upon his arrival at Fort Sill, and asked him if he knew of Indians having left the reserve, at the same time informing him of the massacre of the teamsters near Jacksboro.<sup>148</sup> Tatum told the General that he did not know of any Indians who had left their reservation, but that he would make inquiry concerning the matter. It was not necessary, however, for such an investigation to be put under way, for soon after the interview between General Sherman and Agent Tatum, the raiders came to the reservation and Satan-ta, Satank, and Eagle Heart visited Tatum at his office, and when interrogated concerning the raid, Satanta readily admitted that he had led the raid into Texas and boasted of killing the teamsters and carrying away mules and other property.<sup>149</sup> He said

<sup>148</sup> Mooney, "Calendar History of the Kiowa" in *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 187.

<sup>149</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1871, 502-504.

that he led the raid in person and that if any other chief claimed the credit for it, he was a liar. He gave as his reason for this disastrous foray into Texas that a large amount of their annuity goods had been stolen by the whites; that arms and ammunition had been refused them; and that white people were preparing to build a railroad through his country—which would not be allowed. Turning to the other three chiefs standing silently by, Satanta had them corroborate everything he said.<sup>150</sup>

Very much alarmed about the situation, the agent immediately reported the affair to General Sherman and asked that the Indians be arrested.<sup>151</sup> The irate General asked that the Indians be sent to him, and when they arrived he questioned them concerning the raid. As in his conversation with Tatum, Satanta readily admitted that he had led the foray, saying that he had blown his bugle ordering the attack.<sup>152</sup> General Sherman remained quiet and attentive during this boastful recital by Satanta, but when he had finished he then pointed out to the Indian chieftain that leading such a raid was a very cowardly thing to do. He sternly told him that if the Indians wanted to fight, his soldiers stood

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> This interesting affair is discussed by General Sherman in his *Semi-Official Letters*, 1866-1871, Journal of March, entry of May 27, 1871, MSS., Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>152</sup> Satanta sometimes used a bugle in giving orders during the course of a battle, *ibid.*



ready at any time to meet them in battle.<sup>153</sup> He then informed Satanta that because of his breach of faith with the treaty of Medicine Lodge, he and the other three chiefs associated with him in the raid were to be placed under arrest and sent back to Texas to be tried for their crime. Satanta was very much surprised at the alarming turn of affairs and sought to deny what he had just told Sherman concerning his part in the raid. He said that though he was in the party which had gone to Texas, he had taken no part in the fight; that he had gone along merely to look after the wounded in another party of braves which had gone to Texas and had come in contact with a band of settlers; that if he were let alone he would always use a restraining influence on his braves when they wished to depredate in Texas.

While the conversation was in progress, Lone Wolf, one of the warlike Kiowa chiefs, rode up on his horse, dismounted and approached the house in which General Sherman was talking to the other chiefs.<sup>154</sup> Defiantly he took a blanket from about his shoulders and tied it about his waist, then handing a bow and quiver of arrows to one of his braves and a gun to another, he seated himself on the porch, cocked his gun and laid it across his lap. This hostile act resulted in a brief struggle in which one of the hostile warriors was killed, and

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, pp. 502-504.*

Satanta, Satank and Big Tree were arrested. Eagle Heart made his escape and was not apprehended.

A day or two after the arrest of the raiders, General Mackenzie arrived at Fort Sill, as he was instructed to do in case he did not come in contact with the raiders in Texas, and reported that he had failed to intercept the marauders because of a recent rain which had obliterated all traces of the trail.<sup>155</sup> He was agreeably surprised, however, when informed that the ring leaders of the affair were apprehended and were to be turned over to him to be carried back to Texas for trial before a state court.<sup>156</sup>

Never was there an incident having to do with frontier history quite so spectacular and colorful as that pertaining to the arrest and trial of these notorious raiders in the Southwest. As early as the start of General Mackenzie for Texas with his prisoners, this episode took on a more interesting aspect. While Satank was in one of the wagons, ready for the start, bound and manacled, he called to a Caddo boy standing near and said: "I wish to send a message by you to my people. Tell them that I am dead on the side of the road. I died the first day out, and my bones will be lying on the side of the road. I wish my people to gather them up and take them home."<sup>157</sup>

Leaving Fort Sill, General Mackenzie started

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<sup>155</sup> Marcy's account, May 27, in W. T. Sherman's *Semi-Official Letters*, 1866-1871, MSS., in Library of Congress, Washington.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Mooney, *op. cit.*, 331-332.

toward the south with his prisoners. When Satank realized that at last he was on his way to Texas for trial, he began a loud harangue to the other two prisoners in the wagon, telling them that he was a great chief and warrior, too old to be treated in that manner. Then pointing toward a tree where the road descended to cross a small stream, about a mile from the post, he said: "I shall never go beyond that tree." Then raising his voice, he sang his death song: "Oh Sun, you remain forever but we Kaitsenko must die. Oh Earth, you remain forever but we Kaitsenko must die." Having finished his song, he stripped the handcuffs from his wrists. At the same time he threw the blanket from his shoulders, and seized a knife which he had managed to conceal under it, and began to slash one of the two guards riding in the wagon with them. The soldiers leaped from the wagon, leaving their guns behind, one of which the desperate chief then took and tried to use, but before he could do any damage with it, he was slain by one of the mounted guards riding by the wagon.

The other two Indians, Satanta and Big Tree, were carried southward, across the Red River, back to Jacksboro where they were tried before Judge Charles Soward of the Thirteenth Judicial District, on Wednesday, July 5, 1871.<sup>158</sup> This was one of the most sensational cases ever tried in

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* Though the prisoners were known to be murderers of the foulest type, yet they were given a fair and impartial trial. Attorney Ball took advantage of every point in law bearing on such a case in order that the raiders might receive just treatment.

Texas. Wilbarger says that it was the first and only time that Indians were tried before a civil court in America. Though this statement may not be true, it is quite certain that such cases were extremely rare. The two Indians were defended by Thomas Ball and J. A. Woolfork of Weatherford, and the District Attorney, who prosecuted the case, was S. W. T. Lanham, later Governor of the state. The trial attracted unusual attention throughout the entire frontier of the Southwest. It was generally recognized that this was a case of unusual interest and in all probability would be one of deep significance in the settlement of Indian depredations in Texas.

On the day of the trial the courtroom was crowded with a large number of people who had come to see two of the most notorious criminals ever brought before an American bar of justice. The words of the prosecuting attorney were probably well sanctioned by all those present when he said :

Satanta, the veteran council chief of the Kiowa — the orator, diplomat, the counselor of his tribe — the pulse of his race: — Big Tree, the young war chief, who leads in the thickest of the fight, and follows no one in the chase — the mighty warrior athlete, with the speed of the deer and the eye of an eagle, are before this bar, in the charge of the law! So they would be described by Indian admirers, who live in more secure and favored lands, remote from the frontier — “where distance lends enchantment” to the imagination — where the story of Pocahontas and the speech of Logan, the Mingo, are read, and the dread sound of the war-whoop is not heard. We see them today, dis-

robed of all their fancied graces, exposed in the light of reality, behold them through far different lenses. We recognize in Satanta the arch fiend of treachery and blood – the cunning Catiline – the promoter of strife – the breaker of treaties signed by his own hand – the inciter of his fellows to rapine and murder – the artful dealer in bravado while in the pow-wow, and the most abject coward in the field, as well as the most canting and double-tongued hypocrite when detected and overcome! In Big Tree we perceive the tiger-demon, who has tasted blood and loves it as food – who stops at no crime, how black soever – who is swift at every species of ferocity, and pities not at any sight of agony or death – he can scalp, burn, torture, mangle and deface his victims with all the superlatives of cruelty, and have no feeling of sympathy or remorse. They are both hideous and loathsome in appearance, and we look in vain to see in them anything to be admired or even endured.<sup>159</sup>

Having thus exposed the characters of the two prisoners at the bar, the prosecutor then reviewed the terrible atrocities committed by the savages in their “moonlight raids;” and graphically set forth the scenes of horror and indescribable suffering of their hapless victims. So powerful was the speech of the eloquent attorney that but a short time was spent in deliberation by the jury. The prisoners were pronounced guilty of murder in the first degree and their punishment was fixed at death.<sup>160</sup>

In the course of the trial, Satanta was given a chance to speak for himself. Standing before Judge

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<sup>159</sup> Wilbarger, *op. cit.*, 562-563.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*. It was not necessary for Lanham to overdraw his picture of the account of frontier experiences. Such horror and suffering as encountered by the frontier people of the Southwest was a sad commentary on the military policy carried out in the state at that time.



Soward, partly expressing himself with his manacled hands, he spoke in the Comanche dialect. He attempted to free himself from all blame of the Indian raids by saying that he had always been a friend to the "Tehannas;" that his tribe had taunted him and called him a "squaw" because of his friendship for the people of "Tehanna;" and that on the last raid he came down into Texas as a "big medicine-man to doctor the wounds of the braves." Concluding his plea for freedom he said that if he were allowed to return to his people, "I will wash out the spots of blood and make it (Texas) a white land and there shall be peace, and the Tehannas may plow and drive their oxen to the banks of the river, but if you kill me it will be like a spark in the prairie—make big fire! Burn heap!"<sup>161</sup>

Two of the notable witnesses in the trial of the two Indians were Laurie Tatum and General Renald S. Mackenzie. The former was the agent of the Wichita Reserve, and had sought faithfully to put into force what was known as the "Peace Policy" or "Quaker Policy" of the government. On the other hand, the latter had relentlessly followed up hostile bands of Indians and punished them whenever they were intercepted while raiding on the frontier. So notable was he as an Indian fighter that he was highly respected even by his savage foes. It was the testimony of these two wit-

<sup>161</sup> An imperfect extract of Satanta's speech is given by Wilbarger, *op. cit.*, 567-568.



nesses which resulted in the conviction of the two Indian chiefs.<sup>162</sup>

The trial was not only a matter of local interest but was an incident of national concern, for it was realized that the case might become a precedent by which other similar cases in the future would be tried, and it was not known just what effect this summary punishment of two of the most notorious raiders would have on the Indian tribes north of the Red River. No sooner had the sentence of death been pronounced on the prisoners than Enoch Hoag, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Larned, Kansas, was beseeching the President of the United States to intervene and save Satanta and Big Tree from the gallows, giving as his reason for the request the belief that if the two chiefs were put to death,<sup>163</sup> war would follow along the entire frontier. Not only did he express his fears in regard to the frontier but others were just as loud in voicing their disapproval of the court action in Texas.

Laurie Tatum, the Quaker agent at the Wichita reservation, also favored the mitigation of the sentences of the two chieftains. Actuated doubtless by the mild religious tendency of the Quakers in such

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<sup>162</sup> The "Quaker Policy" was inaugurated by President Grant when he deprived the officers of the army of the right to act as Indian Agents and distributed such appointments among the religious denominations. The Quakers were the first to receive such an appointment, hence the name "Quaker Policy," see *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, II, 436-437.

<sup>163</sup> Tatum to Lanham, given in Wilbarger, *op. cit.*, 509.

matters, he opposed the death sentence and in a letter to Attorney Lanham warned that one of the chief characteristics of the Indians was to seek revenge in such cases and that he had fears for the border settlements if this severe penalty was carried out. Since Indians were the children of the open range, he said that it would be far greater punishment for them to have these sentences commuted to life imprisonment. Whether or not this was the opinion of Judge Soward, for some reason he recommended that the penalty imposed by himself and the jury be commuted to imprisonment for life. Partially through these intercessions in behalf of the condemned Indians the sentences were modified as requested and the two prisoners under a guard furnished by General Reynolds, commander of the Department of Texas, were delivered to the warden of the penitentiary at Huntsville, Texas.

The arrest and imprisonment of the two chiefs caused quite a flurry of excitement among the reservation Indians. Angry threats of retaliation were made by the disgruntled Kiowa and Comanche, but it was a notable fact that, though such manifestations of hostile intentions were declared, a marked decrease in depredations resulted. During this time but few raids were reported in the Department of Texas and the people of the state were hopeful that they had seen the last of them. This might have been true had it not been for the persistent demands of the Kiowa and their allies

that their chiefs be given up, which, coupled with the importunities of those in favor of the "Peace Policy," were sufficient to bring about the freedom of the chiefs.<sup>164</sup>

Leading up toward the freedom of Satanta and Big Tree, the Indians were asked to send a delegation to Washington to see the President of the United States. The Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache had become so menacing in their war preparations that it was deemed prudent to select from among them some of their leaders for this trip.<sup>165</sup> Although some of the tribes responded promptly, the Kiowa were disposed to ignore the invitation.<sup>166</sup> Their consent to such a commission was finally obtained, however, when they were promised the privilege of seeing and conferring with their imprisoned chiefs at some point along the way. In fulfillment of this promise, Satanta and Big Tree were brought up from Texas to Saint Louis under a strong guard to await the coming of the delegation.

At last a party consisting of Lone Wolf, Woman Heart, Red Otter, Dohasan, Sun Boy, Stumbling

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<sup>164</sup> Many of those well disposed toward the negroes of the South during this period of reconstruction were likewise solicitous toward the Indians on the frontier. It was believed by these well intentioned but misled reconstructionists that the government's military policy was too severe and that a more humane policy should be adopted.

<sup>165</sup> When the Kiowa and Comanche complained to Commissioner Alvord of the imprisonment of the two chiefs, he informed them that they need not expect them to be released unless they cease all their depredations on the Southwestern frontier, see *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1872, 136.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, Report of Agent Miles, 250.

Bear, and one other, agreed to go. Some delay was occasioned due to a rumor that the troops contemplated a hostile movement at this time. This report caused some of the Kiowa representatives to stampede, but after the military authorities had succeeded in quieting their fears, the delegation went on its way. The imprisoned chiefs were interviewed by these Indians at Saint Louis, after which they were returned to the custody of the Texas prison officials. The Indian representatives who finally reached Washington were from all the hostile plains' tribes of the Southwest with the exception of some of the Cheyenne, and the Quahadi, or Comanche of the Staked Plains.<sup>167</sup>

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs promised the Kiowa representatives in Washington that the imprisoned chiefs would be released if they would cease warfare on the settlements.<sup>168</sup> Naturally this brought on a storm of protest from the people of Texas. The House of Representatives of this state, with the Senate concurring, voted sixty-two ayes to no nays to ask Governor Davis to grant no request for the freeing of Satanta and Big Tree.<sup>169</sup> General Sherman was so discouraged when he heard that Mr. Delano, Secretary of the Interior, was agitating for the freedom of the Indians, that he wrote: "I hope when Satanta is released and when he is actually killed at the head of a raiding

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Journal, House of Representatives*, 13 Legislature, of Texas, January 14, 1873. Resolution introduced by Representative Veale.

party off his reservation (as certain as next year comes) you will simply decree that the Kiowas are outlawed, their property confiscated, and their most valuable reservation restored to the public domain."<sup>170</sup> Continuing with his objections against freeing the Indians, he wrote: "I believe that Santanta has done fifty murders. Indeed, my idea is that the Indian by nature can't help it. He should no more be tempted by a horse or a convenient scalp than a child should with candy."<sup>171</sup>

Notwithstanding the many protests over the contemplated freedom of the savages, a conference was held at Fort Sill between the agents of the government and the Governor of Texas. After considerable argument pro and con, Governor Davis promised to free the Indians on the condition that if they were caught raiding again they should be returned to the penitentiary at Huntsville. This condition was readily agreed to by the representatives of the Interior Department, and on October 8, 1873, Santanta and Big Tree were released from their confinement.<sup>172</sup>

Many were the complaints at this flagrant disregard of the wishes of the people of Texas. From one end of the state to the other came protests at the action of Governor Davis. Military authorities

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<sup>170</sup> W. T. Sherman to Delano, April 23, 1873. MS., *Semi-Official Letters of W. T. Sherman, 1872-1878*, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1874, p.



were no less chagrined to see the two chiefs set free. General Sherman was so embittered toward the Governor of the state that he wrote him the following: "I believe in making a tour of your frontier,<sup>173</sup> with a small escort, I ran the risk of my life, and I said what I now say to you, that I will not again voluntarily assume that risk in the interest of your frontier, that I believe Satanta and Big Tree will have their revenge if they have not already had it, and that if they are to have scalps, that yours is the first that should be taken."<sup>174</sup>

The wisdom of the position of General Sherman in regard to the danger of renewed depredations is evidently proved by comparing the casualties reported by General Reynolds for 1873, the year in which the Indians were prisoners, and 1874, the first year of their freedom. In the former year there were but sixteen persons killed, two wounded, and four captured in the state of Texas; whereas on the frontier of this state in the latter year there were sixty persons killed, five wounded, and one captured. Concerning these depredations in the latter year, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was compelled to make the following report: "For several years the Comanche and Cheyenne have not ceased their raids in Texas, and so long as Satanta and Big Tree were in the state penitentiary they re-

<sup>173</sup> He referred to the inspection trip at the time the Jacksboro raid took place in 1871.

<sup>174</sup> W. T. Sherman to Davis, February 16, 1874, MS., *Semi-Official Letters of W. T. Sherman, 1872-1878*, loc. cit.



frained from raids, but after their release there is but little doubt that some of the Kiowa, joined by the Comanche, continued their forays of murder and plunder in Texas.”<sup>175</sup> General Augur, who succeeded General Reynolds as commander of the Department of Texas, also seemed to regard the reservation tribes as being chiefly responsible for this increase in the losses on the frontier when he said: “all these outrages were committed by Indians belonging to the Fort Sill reservation, where they are fed by the government and officially regarded as friendly, and their pursuit and punishment within the limits of their reservation prohibited.”<sup>176</sup>

It would be hard to determine what would have been the result of retaining Satanta and Big Tree in the penitentiary at Huntsville, Texas, though these facts given indicate a wholesome fear instilled in the hearts of the raiders, but certain it is that their release at this time was a greivous blunder in that depredations on the frontier of Texas, and the entire Southwest, increased. With these increased forays the perplexed frontiersmen suffered immeasurably. Thus, it was imperative that the

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<sup>175</sup> For comparison of depredations of two years mentioned see reports of General Reynolds, 1873 and 1874, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington; and for the report of Commissioner see *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1874, p. 10.

<sup>176</sup> Report of General Augur, commander of the Department of Texas, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

defensive policy be given up. The savages had again become bold and insolent, and it was necessary for the military arm of the government again to make its power felt among the savages of the Southwest.

## Indian Campaigns of 1874-1875



## Indian Campaigns of 1874-1875

When General C. C. Augur succeeded General Reynolds to the command of the Department of Texas on January 29, 1872, he instituted a more vigorous policy toward the Indians than hitherto had been prosecuted.<sup>177</sup> The troops under the command of each officer in the Department were to be employed to the greatest extent of their ability in guarding against Indian incursions. In case such forays did occur, the federal authorities were not to be content with short expeditions sent into the surrounding country to drive away marauders, but to see that a vigorous, determined, and continuous effort was made, even to the extent of privation of men and horses, if necessary, in order to overtake and punish the pillagers.<sup>178</sup> To this end they were to establish such camps and stations on mail routes and near the settlements, and to direct such scouts as would aid in accomplishing the desired results.

Probably the chief factor entering into the deter-

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<sup>177</sup> Governor Coke of Texas, in referring to the failure of the defensive policy at a later time said, that the "Indians that devastate the frontier of Texas came nine times out of ten from the reservation on our northern frontier." For further discussion on this point see *Journal*, p. 36, 14th Legislature, 2 sess., January, 1875.

<sup>178</sup> For type of such orders see *Special Orders, Fort Griffin, Texas*, June 19, 1873, I, 222. MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

mination of carrying out aggressive campaigns against hostile Indians in the Southwest was the vindictiveness of the savage raiders. The Howard Wells Massacre of April 20, 1872, was an instance of this character. On the date above referred to, Captain N. Cooney with two companies of the Ninth Cavalry (Negro troops) while enroute to Fort Clark, stopped at Howard Wells, in Crockett County, at six o'clock in the evening, and discovered a large train of wagons burning and the charred bodies of sixteen persons who had been killed by a band of Comanche and Kiowa from the Fort Sill reservation.<sup>179</sup> The command was ordered to pursue the Indians, who were found on the side of a mountain overlooking the valley. When the troops came within range, a volley was poured into the midst of the surprised Indians, and they, by way of retaliation, opened fire on their advancing foe. Seeing that the Indians were in a strong position, Captain Cooney ordered his men to dismount and advance on foot. This they did. Taking advantage of boulders and ravines, they slowly advanced on the Indians, firing as they went. In this advance, First Lieutenant Vincent was shot through

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<sup>179</sup> Major-general Hazen, in writing concerning this affair, later gave it as his opinion that the Indians were Comanche and Kiowa from the Wichita reservation, because, he said, the Wells for many years past had been visited by these Indians. He said that he had listened for hours to Satank and Satanta boast of such exploits. In the light of this statement it is difficult to understand why he did not allow General Sheridan to carry out his campaign against the Kiowa and Comanche in the winter of 1868. For statement of General Hazen, see *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 3, 1872.



both legs while leading his men up the steep mountain side, and after an improvised stretcher had been made, he was carried to the rear. Night soon came on, and as it was seen that it would take some time to dislodge the savages, and as the men had exhausted their ammunition, an order was given to fall back. Lieutenant Vincent suffered so severely from the wound that he died a short time after he was brought back to camp.

On the following morning the troops advanced again to the attack, but during the night the Indians had silently withdrawn from their position and the troops were forced to march away without having punished the perpetrators of the crime. In respect to the valor of the troops, however, the commanding officer made the following comment: "The men engaged did their duty, considering that, at the time the pursuit was ordered, all were fatigued and expecting to camp and get a drink of good water. All wants were forgotten and all were animated with a spirit to punish the perpetrators of the horrid deeds that a passing glance explained." <sup>180</sup>

The Jacksboro and Howard Wells massacres were instances of what was taking place on the entire frontier of the Southwest. In a message to the Texas legislature, Governor Coke said:

Under the present Indian policy of the general government

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<sup>180</sup> *Annual Report* of General Augur, commanding Department of Texas, 1872, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. Accounts of this affair are also found in *Post Returns*,

the Texas frontier has suffered more than it ever did before and the country near the reservations has suffered worst. Permits are granted the Indians to leave the reservations sometimes to hunt; sometimes on one pretext then on another, and they invariably come into Texas, steal horses, drive off cattle, and very frequently kill and scalp men, women, and children, and when they return, it is a fact that can be substantiated with abundant proof, that white men, on or near the reservation, are always ready with guns and ammunition, blankets, and other things desired by the Indians to trade for stolen stock and other plunder gotten from Texas.<sup>181</sup>

The Governor was probably unaware that at this time an aggressive campaign was being carried out against the tribes referred to by him as being the raiders of the Texas frontier, and that such severe punishment was being dealt these marauders as to bring permanently to an end their depredations.

To carry out a vigorous campaign against the hostile tribes no officer in the Department of Texas was better fitted than General R. S. Mackenzie. Even before the new policy had been put into operation, he had proved to be a very energetic man. From October to November, 1871, with thirteen officers and two hundred and forty-eight men, he carried out an expedition into the Indian country to the west of Fort Richardson, defeated a band of Comanche and returned after covering a distance of five hundred and nine miles on the march. Following this scout, he made another directly

*Fort Clark*, April, 1872; and *Hostile Indians*, Military Division of the Missouri, 1882. Sixteen people were found burned with their camp equipment.

<sup>181</sup> *Journal*, p. 37, 14 Legislature, 2 sess., January, 1875.

across the Staked Plains, previously referred to, and in 1872 made one of the most successful expeditions against the Comanche which was carried out during this year.<sup>182</sup>

This scout was made on September 21, 1872, when with five companies of the Fourth Cavalry and one company of the Twenty-fourth Infantry, two hundred and fifteen enlisted men and nine Tonkaway scouts, he left the camp, which he had previously established on the "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos," and proceeded against the Comanche which had been depredating on the frontier settlements. On September 29 the march was taken up on McClellan Creek<sup>183</sup> and after marching down that stream for about two miles, fresh tracks were found by the Tonkaway scouts.<sup>184</sup> When the soldiers perceived that the tracks of the animals led in the direction of an Indian camp, they were followed by the command at a gallop from one o'clock P.M. until twelve miles had been covered, when a Comanche Indian village was sighted about four miles distant. Urging on their horses, the troops approached at a gallop and reached the village at about four P.M. A sharp fight of about one hour's duration followed, resulting in the capture of the

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<sup>182</sup> *The Mackenzie Trail*—no. 2,236,858, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>183</sup> McClellan Creek is a small stream running through Wheeler County and emptying into the North Fork of the Red River in that county.

<sup>184</sup> The Tonkaways were enemies of the Comanche and Kiowa, and were known even from an early time to be friendly toward the white people of the Southwest.

camp. Resistance, to any considerable extent, was made at only one point where three companies of the Fourth Cavalry were held up, being engaged from the commencement to the close of the attack more continuously than the others. Company D was sent out after the horses, while Company I, being mounted, charged through a small village somewhat detached from the larger group of lodges, and pursued the retreating Indians until dark before rejoining the command. After the camp was taken, one company was sent in pursuit of the fleeing Indians. The village captured consisted of two hundred and sixty-two lodges, and was situated about seven miles above the mouth of McClellan Creek in Wheeler County, Texas. In this engagement twenty-three warriors were killed and one hundred and twenty women and children captured, and in addition to the prisoners, a large number of horses and mules were also taken.<sup>185</sup>

The most widely known expedition of General Mackenzie, however, and one which typified the character of the offensive policy, was that carried out against the Kickapoos<sup>186</sup> and Lipans of Mexico. These were American Indians who had sought a refuge in Mexico, and from there were sending expeditions against the Texas frontier. Concerning

<sup>185</sup> *Tabular Statement of Scouts and Expeditions*, Department of Texas, September 30, 1873, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>186</sup> The Kickapoos were a part of the tribe by that name formerly residing north of the Red River. During the Civil War period they migrated to Mexico, and during this time were using this region as a point from which to project hostile raids into Texas.

the activities of these Indians, General Augur said: "As I have stated before, it is very discouraging and disheartening to troops when on a trail and in hot pursuit of depredating Indians and Mexicans to see them escape by crossing the Rio Grande."<sup>187</sup> Because of this refuge many times the Mexican and Indian thieves would cross the Rio Grande, then turn and shake their weapons and jeer at their pursuers as they rode into the Mexican wilds.

On May 17, 1873, General Mackenzie, while commanding at and about Fort Clark received information that a fresh trail of depredating Indians had been found leading toward the Rio Grande. He immediately set out in pursuit with six companies of the Fourth Cavalry. When he arrived on the banks of the river, he found that the marauders had successfully eluded him by seeking safety in Mexico near the town of Remolina.<sup>188</sup> General Mackenzie decided to take upon himself the responsibility of bringing on international complications by crossing the river.<sup>189</sup> Crossing the stream on the trail of the marauders, the command marched at a trot or gallop for a distance of seventy-six miles, between one o'clock on the afternoon of the previous day until six o'clock on the morning of the attack. The supply train could not maintain the

<sup>187</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, Commander of Department of Texas*, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>188</sup> The *San Antonio Daily Express* of June 25, 1873, charged that the Mexican officials were in connivance with the Indians in that they purchased their stolen stock, etc.

<sup>189</sup> American officers were ordered not to cross the Rio Grande in pursuit of raiders.



pace set by the cavalry and was left behind. The troops were two days without food, save a few crackers carried in their pockets, and for hours had to ride thirsty and hungry. On the morning of May 18, the village of the savages, near Remolina, was attacked, and as a result, nineteen warriors were killed and a number wounded. Castillitos, the aged chief of the Lipans, forty women and children, and fifty-six ponies were captured.<sup>190</sup> The loss of the invaders was one killed and three wounded. So quietly and quickly did General Mackenzie act that before the Mexican authorities were well aware of his presence, or could offer resistance, the American troops had recrossed to the north side of the Rio Grande.

After the withdrawal of Mackenzie's forces, the Mexican government protested bitterly the violation of their territory, saying that Mackenzie's raid was but little less than murder, and that the band attacked was a harmless, peaceful group of Indians. Even the War Department officials were not pleased with what the fiery General had done, and though previously he had been considered as one of the most energetic officers in the army, other generals were favored with the more important assignments after the Remolina raid. Whether or not the criticism was merited, it was a noticeable fact that the Lipans and Kickapoos of Mexico were more circumspect after this date.

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<sup>190</sup> *Annual Report, Department of Texas, 1873, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.*



The nature and extent of the depredations of these Indians along the Rio Grande was known to the authorities at Washington for some time prior to this affair, but there was no order given to any military commander in Texas to put a stop to them in the way that General Mackenzie did. In order to make an end to the Indian problem in this vicinity, it was decided to remove them, by the permission of the Mexican authorities, to the reservation north of the Red River. To this end, commissioners, acting under orders of the Secretary of the Interior, labored to effect their removal from Mexico.<sup>191</sup> The representatives of the United States were aided in this work by Cepeda, Governor of the state of Coahuila, Mexico, within whose jurisdiction most of the Indians resided. The commissioners, in having removed a part of the Kickapoos, all of the Pottawatomies, and a few others, partially accomplished their task, but the Lipans spurned all the overtures of the American agents. With them remained a few Kickapoos, but the remnant left in Mexico later intermarried with the Mexicans and became identified with the other inhabitants of that region; the most of them migrating to the mountains, from which point but few raids were made by them in later years.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> The greater number of these tribes were removed and placed on a reservation on the North Fork of Canadian, Indian Territory; see *Annual Report, War Department*, 1875, p. 65. For General Mackenzie's campaigns cf. General G. W. Cullum, *Biographical Register*, II, 840.

<sup>192</sup> Lipans during the first half of the 19th Century roamed over

Though this campaign had proven salutary indeed in bringing about an immediate cessation of depredations of the Indians living across the Rio Grande, the federal officials hesitated to inaugurate a harsh policy toward the reservation tribes living north of the Red River. In an attempt to arrive at some understanding with the hostile Indians, government agents, in the summer of 1872, called a general council of all the civilized tribes living in the Indian Territory.<sup>193</sup> From this council the commissioners urged the friendly Indians to send couriers to all the various bands of hostile tribes, urging upon them that they agree to a permanent peace among themselves and with the United States government. These commissioners not only conferred with the Comanche and Kiowa but also with the Caddo, Wichita, Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Apache. From this council held in May, 1874, the commissioners sent to Washington many "rose-tinted" reports concerning the peaceful disposition of the hostile tribes, but persons on the frontier who better understood the Indians were not quite so sure of success. The Kiowa were exceedingly indifferent to the overtures of the government. White Horse, their most notorious raider at this time, declared that the old chiefs might make peace, but that he and the young men of his tribe would not

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the territory from the Concho to the Nueces rivers, and almost as far south as the Rio Grande.

<sup>193</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, Commander of Department of Texas, 1874*, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

make peace or return captives until their many grievances were satisfied. He further stated that their hostility was based on the reduction of their reservation and that until they were again allowed to roam unmolested over the region from the Missouri River to the Rio Grande, they would consider their hostility well justified.

It was not difficult for raiders such as these to influence other tribes to open hostility toward the whites. By the summer of 1874, large bands of Comanche, Arapahoe and Cheyenne were stealing away from their reservations and depredating on the frontiers of Kansas, Colorado and Texas. The Indians claimed that they were justified in their indiscriminate warfare on the frontier. They contended that they had been unjustly and harshly dealt with. Not only did they rebel at being confined on small reservations, but since the annuity goods furnished by the government were not sufficient to sustain them, it became necessary for them to leave their reservations for their food supply—the buffaloes.<sup>194</sup> The building of railways through their country was looked upon with hostility. For generations their forefathers had occupied this country; they had been taught that to defend it was

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<sup>194</sup> General Nelson A. Miles, at this time stationed on the frontier, justified the Indians in their course of action by saying that the allowances made by the government were usually exhausted in six months and that it was necessary for the Indians then to leave the reservations in search of food or starve. He attempted to account for this state of affairs by maintaining that a portion of the supplies due the savages were withheld. For discussion of this point see *Personal Recollections of Nelson A. Miles*, 157.

the duty of all loyal warriors; consequently it was not difficult for them to bring themselves to the point of open rebellion, even though they had agreed to the Medicine Lodge treaty which placed them on government reservations and provided for the construction of railways through their country. Thus, throwing all caution to the winds, they renewed their depredations, sending out their expeditions on the settlements from Kansas on the north to Texas on the south.<sup>195</sup>

When it was found that overtures of peace were of no avail in dealing with the savages, the military commanders of the various posts in the Southwest were given orders to hunt them out and chastise them, even though it be necessary to follow them up summer and winter in order to accomplish this object.

The military campaigns comprehended in operations of 1874-1875, included Texas as well as the Red River region, which was not the case in the campaign of 1868. General Augur made every effort to put in the field all the available forces of his command. Colonel R. S. Mackenzie, with one column, consisting of eight companies of cavalry, five companies of infantry and thirty Indian scouts, was to operate from his old supply camp on the "Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos," and was to draw his supplies from Fort Griffin, a distance of

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<sup>195</sup> For detailed accounts of these depredations see *Annual Report*, Secretary of War, 1873 and 1874, MS., in Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.









one hundred and twenty miles; Lieutenant-colonel Davidson, Tenth Cavalry, with six companies of cavalry, three companies of infantry, and forty-four Indian scouts was to operate west from Fort Sill, drawing his supplies from that post; and Lieutenant-colonel Buell, Eleventh Infantry, with still another column, consisting of six companies of cavalry, two companies of infantry and thirty Indian scouts, was to operate between the two with his supply camp near where the Wanderers Creek empties into the Red River.<sup>196</sup>

At the same time Colonel Nelson A. Miles with eight companies of the Sixth Cavalry and four companies of the Fifth Infantry, with three small field guns, was sent from Camp Supply, Indian Territory, to co-operate with these forces, while still a smaller force consisting of four companies of the Eighth Cavalry, under the command of Major Price, was to move east from Fort Union, now in Mora County, New Mexico, along the Canadian River as far as Antelope Hills, in the western part of the Wichita Reserve, where the latter two bodies were to unite if necessary.<sup>197</sup>

When plans were complete, the roving savages were given warning in the following order which was sent out: "All Indians professing to be friendly must come in immediately and be enrolled and

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<sup>196</sup> In order to carry out these operations, the Indians were transferred from the care of the Interior Department to that of the War Department. For full details of plans see citation.

<sup>197</sup> Report of Brevet Major-general John Pope, in *Message and Documents of the War Department for 1874 and 1875*, part i, 30.

every Indian capable of bearing arms must answer to daily roll calls and not receive additional Indians into their bands without permission in each case after examinations.”<sup>198</sup> Word was also sent out to the Indians who were hesitant about accepting this summons, that if they did not come in by August 3, and submit to the terms fixed by the government, they would be treated as hostiles and the troops would attack them wherever found, and furthermore, they could not go to another agency.<sup>199</sup> As a result of this summons, 173 Kiowa, 108 Apache, and 83 Comanche, claimed protection of the Agency by August 3.<sup>200</sup>

Late in August, 1874, a band of Nokoni Comanche came into the camp of the friendly Comanche at the Wichita Agency, saying that they desired peace. Colonel Davidson, commanding at Fort Sill, went out to receive their surrender. They agreed to give up their arms and had already given up a number of pistols and guns when the question arose as to whether they should be allowed to retain their bows and arrows. While awaiting the disposition of this question, the chief of the Nokoni, Red Food, gave a whoop, whether as a call for help or merely to summon other chiefs to confer with him, is not known, but the troops were so

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<sup>198</sup> *Report of General Augur, Commander of Department of Texas, 1874, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.*

<sup>199</sup> All three tribes found fault with their agencies.

<sup>200</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, 1874, MS., loc. cit.* Only a small number from each tribe responded.

alarmed that they opened fire on the Indians.<sup>201</sup> Lone Wolf and a band of Kiowa were present at the time, awaiting the distribution of their annuity goods, when the incident occurred. He and his band became alarmed lest there be a repetition of the massacre of 1864,<sup>202</sup> and he returned the fire. A general fight ensued between the troops on the one hand and the Kiowa and Comanche on the other. The Indians sent runners to the other tribes near by with the message that the troops were killing the Indians. As this was ration day, nearly all the tribes of the Wichita Agency were present. The Kiowa and Comanche attacked and burned the agency house, killing four citizens and wounding several soldiers. After the fight most of the Indians involved fled to the Staked Plains. Satanta, Big Tree, Woman Heart and Poor Buffalo, who fled to the plains, came in soon after this incident to the Cheyenne Agency at Darlington and surrendered with a large number of their people, saying that they were tired of war and that they did not like Fort Sill. Though Satanta was not responsible for the outbreak, being connected with it more by accident, in November, 1874, he was again arrested and returned to the state prison in Texas, in keeping with the agreement between Governor Davis and the federal commissioners. Satanta be-

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<sup>201</sup> Mooney, James, "Calendar History of the Kiowa," in *17th Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 205.

<sup>202</sup> The massacre referred to here was when Colonel Chivington with some Colorado troops attacked a camp of Cheyenne under the protection of Fort Lyon and massacred men, women and children alike.

came despondent after being returned to confinement and on October 11, 1878, committed suicide by throwing himself from the second story of the prison to the pavement below.<sup>203</sup>

While a few of the hostile tribes accepted the protection of the government reservations, those which did not were receiving severe treatment at the hands of the several converging bodies of troops. Even before the expeditions had reached the Indian country a small band of buffalo hunters, who were wantonly slaying the game of the Indians, had administered a severe reverse to a large number of the hostile warriors at "Adobe Walls" on the Canadian River.<sup>204</sup> Thousands of buffalo were being slaughtered, and it became evident to the Indians that at this rate their game supply would soon disappear.<sup>205</sup> In addition to this trouble with the buffalo hunters, the Indians complained

<sup>203</sup> With the death of this noted chief the Kiowa lost one of their most aggressive leaders.

<sup>204</sup> General John Pope said that these white hunters were here in direct violation of a promise made by the government agents that the game of this region would be preserved for the red men. If such a promise were made to the Comanche and Kiowa it was an obvious violation of the treaty of annexation by which Texas became a state of the American Union. When she was admitted it was expressly understood that she should retain control of her public domain.

<sup>205</sup> Under ordinary conditions it would have been difficult for the Indians to have adjusted themselves to the point where they could completely rely on the promises of the government for supplies, but when the agents did not carry out the plan of the federal government in distributing these goods, which were pitifully inadequate, the Indians looked upon the destruction of the buffalo by the white hunters as criminal waste. To them, the buffalo constituted their chief article of food.

that white thieves were stealing their horses. In substantiation of this charge it was proven that forty-three horses were stolen from Little Robe, chief of the Cheyenne, and when nothing was done to return the stolen property of the Indians, a surveying party, working on the reservation was attacked by the Indians with the result that one of their number was killed. When this occurred the Indians knew that they would be held accountable for their lawless deed and therefore prepared for war.

It was at this time that a young medicine man, named Isatai, arose among the Quahadi Comanche and claimed supernatural powers. He boasted that he was frequently caught up into the heavens where he conferred with the Father of the red men, and that he had been given power to control the elements, to send rain, wind, thunder, lightning, or drought upon the earth, just as he pleased. He promised to protect all tribes which would come to him, and further promised to make Indians immune to the bullets of the soldiers' guns, even though they stood before the muzzles. Some of his immediate followers were so deluded (or else sought to delude others) as to say that they had seen him ascend into the heavens. To impress duly the warriors with his power he called for a council of all the tribes to meet him in May, 1874, at the junction of Elk Creek and the North Fork of the Red River.<sup>206</sup> Here he was to reveal his mag-

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<sup>206</sup> Mooney, *op. cit.*



ical powers and impart to his brethren what the Father of the red men would have them do.

So many were the rumors of his wonderful powers that a large concourse of both friendly and hostile Indians were present on the appointed day to hear what he had to say. Coming before the meeting of these various tribes, Isatai told them that the "Great Father" bade him urge his red brothers to seek revenge for the many wrongs which had been perpetrated on them by the whites. Accordingly, under the spell of his personality, a war party was made up to go to Texas to seek revenge on the Tonkaways, because they had slain some of their warriors, but when they learned that the latter were under the protection of Fort Griffin, it was then decided to attack the buffalo hunters in their rendezvous at "Adobe Walls."<sup>207</sup>

The battle fought here stands out in the history of the Staked Plains as one of the most notable engagements of this period. In this fight the confederated Comanche, Cheyenne, and Kiowa made a combined assault on the buffalo hunters.<sup>208</sup> The at-

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>208</sup> Probably the most trustworthy accounts of this battle are found in *Personal Recollections of Nelson A. Miles*, 1898, 160-163; and George Bird Grinnell, "Bent's Old Fort and its Builders," in *Kansas State Historical Society Collections*, xv, 1919-1922, pp. 43-44. There were two "Adobe Walls" fights. The first was between Colonel "Kit" Carson with three hundred and thirty-five soldiers on the one hand and several hundred Kiowa and allied Indian bands on the other. This battle was fought at an old adobe building, some distance above that mentioned in the above discussion, in November, 1864. The engagement lasted almost the entire day, and finally Carson withdrew from the field, covering his retreat by the use of a small field gun.



tack started about June 27 and lasted for several days. The Indians led by the noted Comanche chief, Quanah Parker, were urged on by their medicine man who assured them that bullets of the white hunters' guns would not hurt them. Quanah Parker, losing faith in the whole enterprise, called off his men. He later explained why he did so by saying, "No use fight adobe." <sup>209</sup>

In the meantime the movements of the troops had been put under way and a determined campaign was carried out against the hostile warriors. On February 11, 1875, Lieutenant-colonel Buell and his command fell in with a party of hostile Kiowa and Comanche approximately twenty-six miles west of Double Mountains, Kent County, Texas, and administered to them a severe defeat, killing eleven warriors and capturing six head of stock. <sup>210</sup> Then five months later he attacked another party to the west of this position, scattering the Indians in all directions who in their precipitate flight left behind their camp equipment.

The forces under the command of Major Price, in advancing from New Mexico toward the east, came in contact with a hostile band of savages on September 12, between the Sweetwater Creek and

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The small stream on which the battle was fought is now known as Kit Carson Creek which runs through Hutchinson County. The second fight was that referred to above between the buffalo hunters and the Indians.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> *Post Returns, Fort Griffin*, February, 1875, MS., and *Medical History of Fort Griffin*, in vol. 52, p. 14, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

the Washita River, and a spirited engagement followed. The Indians were finally driven from the field, however, and pursued for several miles.<sup>211</sup>

Probably the most severe defeat suffered by the Indians was that administered by General Mackenzie's force when on September 26, he surprised a large body of Cheyenne and their allies at Cañon Blanco, a tributary of the Red River, destroying over one hundred tepees and capturing their entire camp outfit, together with fourteen hundred horses and mules. Mackenzie's operations were retarded by the difficulty of getting his supplies from the south, "and his command was very much broken down by the terrible rains that followed the dry seasons, and made that portion of the country in which he was operating almost impassable for wagons."<sup>212</sup>

Of the forces coming up from the south, on October 9, Colonel Buell, with the force previously referred to, struck and destroyed a large Kiowa camp on the Salt Fork of the Red River, and eight days later, Captain A. R. Chaffee of Mackenzie's command, surprised and destroyed another camp near the Washita River.

On November 8, near McClellan Creek, in Wheeler County, Texas, Lieutenant Baldwin with one troop of the Sixth Cavalry and one company of the Fifth Infantry, attacked a band of Indians,

<sup>211</sup> *Annual Report, Department of Texas, 1874, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.*

<sup>212</sup> *Personal Recollections of General Nelson A. Miles, 174.*

routing them and recapturing two little girls. A brief account of this incident is set forth in the following words: "November 8th, near McClellan Creek, Texas, Lieutenant F. D. Baldwin, Fifth Infantry, attacked a company of Indians, routing them. Two little girls, Adelaide and Julia Germaine, aged five and seven, were rescued. The children stated that two older sisters were still held by the Indians. Even their tender years did not spare them from dreadful treatment by the Indians."<sup>213</sup> These little children were sent back to Fort Leavenworth in charge of Dr. Powell, who, upon his return to the army, brought with him a photograph which he had taken of them in their improved condition under the ministrations of sympathetic friends at the post. General Miles took the picture and put it into the hands of one of his Kiowa scouts, having written on the back of it this message to the two girls still in captivity:

TO THE MISSES GERMAINE: Your little sisters are well, and in the hands of friends. Do not be discouraged. Every effort is being made for your welfare.

NELSON A. MILES,

*Colonel and Brevet Major-general, U. S. Army,  
Commanding Expedition.*

Taking the picture the Indian scout started west-

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<sup>213</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, vol. 206, p. 146, Old Records Section, War Department, Washington. The troops were deeply moved by the story of horror told by the girls. When they related the indescribable suffering and indignities imposed on them and their two sisters, who were still in the hands of the Indians, one of the men present said that he had traveled the plains for twenty years but that he would stay there always or recover the two older girls.

ward and came upon a band of hostile Cheyenne, who held the two older girls as prisoners, near the line of New Mexico. The picture was handed the older of the two girls and at the same time the scout demanded in the name of General Miles that the girls be returned to his care and that the band immediately return to the reservation. In the event that they were not to comply with his request the band was to be wiped out. The savages were in no condition to disobey this stern command. Many of their horses had died from starvation, while the Indians themselves were in a half famished condition. Thus, with no other alternative for them, they immediately began their eastward journey, nor did they stop until they had arrived at the reservation where they surrendered to General Miles their two prisoners.

The campaign against the Indians was pushed with vigor. That under the command of General Nelson A. Miles started from Camp Supply toward the southwest to strike the Indians near Antelope Hills. The forces under the command of this enterprising officer were given no rest, and so severe were their sufferings that at one time it was necessary for them to open the veins in their arms in order to moisten their swollen tongues, so extreme was their thirst. General Miles struck a trail of the savages in the neighborhood of the Red River and in his haste to overtake the Indians, left all the baggage with the exception of his ammunition wagons and two ambulances. Over dry

cañons and sandy wastes the soldiers followed the Indians, suffering from thirst and extreme heat of an unusually warm summer, they at last came to the foot of the Staked Plains. Near the Tulé Cañon the fleeing Indians were overtaken, and without waiting for his men to rest, General Miles gave orders for an immediate attack.<sup>214</sup>

The battle which followed was one of the most colorful Indian encounters during this series of engagements. As the troops came to a broken region of terrain near the Tulé, they were suddenly set upon from all sides by yelling Indians. The soldiers were not dismayed by this surprise attack but entered into the fight with ardor. Captain T. C. Tupper was conspicuous in leading his company into battle and Captain A. R. Chaffee advanced to the attack shouting to his men, "If any man is killed I will make him a corporal."<sup>215</sup> The attack of the troops was made more effective through the use of gatling guns under the charge of Lieutenant Pope. The Indians being assailed from all sides by the enthusiastic cavalymen broke and fled in all directions, leaving their dead on the battle field. Colonel Miles, in speaking of the pursuit, said: "The retreat and pursuit were kept up with the utmost energy, descending into deep cañons and scaling bluffs almost impassable, some portion of the Indians now and then attempting to stem the

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<sup>214</sup> The extreme sufferings of the men herein described are mentioned by General Miles in his *Personal Recollections*, 168.

<sup>215</sup> Captain Chaffee later arose to the rank of a general and served with distinction in the rebellion of the Philippines.



tide at some favorable point, upon which the troops would instantly charge and carry their stronghold, until at last the Indians were so closely pressed that they could not even make a show of reforming, but sped away demoralized and in full flight.<sup>216</sup>

Thus, surrounded on all sides, the bewildered Indians saw the futility of further resistance. They had suffered severely in men and property during these campaigns, and as a result of their successive losses the Kiowa and Comanche became discouraged and sent messengers to ask permission that they be allowed to return to their agency. Permission was given for them to do so, and Tabernanaca, White Wolf, and Red Food, with their people, started in and were met on the Elm Creek by a detachment of troops from Fort Sill under Major Scofield, who received their surrender and brought them to the fort. In February, 1875, Lone Wolf, Red Otter, Swan, Dohasan, and Poor Buffalo, and all their people, were met on their way to the fort. Philip McCusker, an interpreter, and some friendly Indians received the surrender of the Indians who gave up their arms and horses. All the Kiowa and some of the Cheyenne also came in and surrendered to the authority of the government, but a large part of the Cheyenne still refused to accept the restrictions of the agency.<sup>217</sup>

The campaign against the Cheyenne was con-

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, p. 272.



tinued with so much vigor that they were given no rest during the winter and spring of 1875. This campaign was also conducted under trying conditions incident to the changing weather in the Southwest, and though the work was hard on the troops, it was doubly so on the Indians who were constantly fleeing before the remorseless advance of the soldiers. Early in March, 1875, the Cheyenne, broken down with constant moving about, harassed by the troops, gave up their horses, bows and arrows, and guns and other equipment. Then Stone Calf, principal chief, signified his intention of giving up. The main body of Cheyenne surrendered to Lieutenant-colonel Thomas H. Niel, Sixth Cavalry, immediately north of the Wichita Reserve near their own agency at Darlington, and on April 27, they were formally transferred from the charge of the military to that of their agency and declared again to be at peace with the government. The Quahadi Comanche, probably the most warlike and untamable of all the plains' tribes, saw that further resistance was useless, and in June, 1875, came into Fort Sill and surrendered themselves with a large number of mules and horses.

When the Indians began to surrender, orders were received at Fort Sill to select from among them the principal ring leaders in the recent disturbance and send them to Saint Augustine, Florida. In order to identify these, the two oldest Germaine girls passed along the line of Indians drawn up for inspection and pointed out to the

officers those whom they knew to be raiders and trouble-makers. As a result of this policy seventy-five of the most culpable leaders were arrested and sent to prison.<sup>218</sup>

This summary treatment of those responsible for the raids and the continued campaigns against the savages put a stop to depredations on the frontier of Texas from across the Red River.<sup>219</sup> General Sherman in commenting on the success of the campaigns and the treatment of the Indian chieftains, said that for twenty years the Kiowa and Comanche had been raiding on the Texas frontier, extending their depredations as far as Chihuahua, Mexico, but, he said, "they are now dismounted and disarmed and, I may say, corralled on a reservation north of Jacksboro,<sup>220</sup> and for the past two years, they have committed no raids or made incursions into Texas."<sup>221</sup>

In this manner was the problem connected with the Indian depredations from across the Red River

<sup>218</sup> The four Germaine girls were later provided for by the appropriation of \$10,000 which was diverted from the Cheyenne annuity. General Miles was appointed their guardian and later the girls married and settled down to a contented and happy life.

<sup>219</sup> For General Sherman's point of view see his *Annual Report*, 1875, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington, file no. 5993.

<sup>220</sup> General Sherman's statement of the location of the reservation is misleading. Though it was north of Jacksboro, it was beyond the Red River in the Indian Territory. He probably remembered quite well the risks he ran in visiting the frontier in 1871 in connection with the Jacksboro massacre when he made this statement.

<sup>221</sup> General Sherman's testimony before the House Committee on Military Affairs, November 21, 1877, in *House Misc. Docs.*, no. 64, 45th Cong., 2nd Sess., VI, 18.

effectively solved. The frontiers of Kansas, Colorado and Texas had been harassed for many years with the incursions from these wild tribes, and the defensive policy was not equal to the task of guarding frontier interests against these inroads. Peace was only brought to the westernmost settlements when military forces followed the Indian marauders up to their permanent camping grounds and gave them no rest, winter or summer, until they surrendered and became reconciled to the restrictions of reservation life. The troubles in New Mexico were separate and apart from those of the Red River region and will therefore be treated in a separate chapter.



The Rio Grande Frontier, 1865-1881





## The Rio Grande Frontier, 1865-1881

When the leaders of the various hostile tribes of the Indian territory were arrested and sent to Fort Pickens, Florida, in 1875, there was an abrupt end of Indian depredations on the Texas frontier from that quarter. The Indians there had been taught a much needed lesson, and were disposed to accept their fate and reconcile themselves to reservation life. Had this been the attitude of the reservation tribes of New Mexico, all Indian forays into Texas might have ended in 1876; but unhappily this was not true. Using New Mexico as a base from which to project hostile expeditions into Texas, the Mescaleros and similar bands of irreconcilable tribes made constantly recurring forays. In the following discussion it will be seen how the same vigorous military movements as used against the reservation Indians of the Indian Territory brought complete success when employed against those of New Mexico.

In addition to the cattle stealing of the Comanche, abetted by the dishonest whites of that region, the other New Mexico tribe giving the most trouble to the Texas frontier was the Mescalero Apache. These Indians were originally located at Bosque Redondo, an agency on the Pecos River

and now in Guadalupe County, and had begun to show some disposition to become civilized in that they tilled the soil and were becoming content in their new environment, when in 1864, the Navajoes, a more powerful tribe, were located on the same reservation with them. The move was so undesirable to the Mescaleros that by 1867, all had left the reserve to the Navajoes and had begun to depredate on the New Mexico and Texas settlements.<sup>222</sup> In October, 1870, Captain Chambers McKibben, commanding at Fort Stanton, captured two Mescalero women whom he sent to make peace overtures to their tribe. In February, 1871, a small band of Mescaleros, under a sub-chief, La Paz, came into Fort Stanton and said that they desired peace. They were sent back to the remainder of their wandering tribesmen with a message for them to come into the fort. This they did and soon returned bringing word that the others would come into the reservation as soon as the grass was sufficiently advanced to permit their animals to cross the plains.<sup>223</sup> In accordance with their promise the

<sup>222</sup> For further details of the location of the dissatisfied tribe, see *Annual Report of the Bureau of Indian Affairs*, 1871, no. 34, New Mexico Superintendency. The Navajoes were settled here though the officials of the Indian Bureau knew at the time that they were hostile toward the Mescaleros and that in all likelihood trouble would follow such a settlement.

<sup>223</sup> In addition to the depredations of the Mescaleros on the western section of Texas, the Membrenos and Mogollones, together known as the Gilenos, or Southern Apache, were responsible for many raids, and at times the Arizona Chiricahua Apache aided in these raids. For confirmation see Bancroft's *Arizona and New Mexico*, xvii, 744-745.

Indians came to Fort Stanton after a short time, and by 1871, five hundred or six hundred were on the reservation.<sup>224</sup>

Though the Mescalero Apache were settled on the Fort Stanton reservation, and nominally at peace with the white people during the time of the trouble with the hostile tribes of the Indian Territory from 1872 to 1875, yet in May, 1873, a child was captured by them within fifteen miles of San Antonio, and June 12, of the same year, the editor of the *San Antonio Daily Express* called attention to the practice of cattle stealing or "lifting" in Texas and New Mexico and said that it had become an intolerable nuisance, paralyzing trade, driving away the settlers, and causing endless bloodshed and disorder.<sup>225</sup> He further stated that hundreds of thousands of horses, oxen, and mules had been driven off since 1869 and that scores of ranches had been burned and valuable lives lost in defense. Even General Pope, commanding the Department of the Missouri, shared this feeling of pessimism when he said that the Apache in southern New Mexico were precisely what they had always been, and, he added, "what they always will be — squalid, idle vagabonds, utterly worthless and

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<sup>224</sup> These Indians had also been guilty of trading their stolen plunder to thieves of New Mexico. Strenuous efforts were made by the Indian agents of that region to put a stop to this illicit traffic but complete success was never attained, see *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1871, no. 34, New Mexico Superintendency.

<sup>225</sup> "A Nut for the Frontier Commission to Crack," in *San Antonio Daily Express* of May 14, 1875.

hopeless;" and that "those on the reservation at Fort Stanton Reserve we manage to keep reasonably quiet, and that is all that can be said."<sup>226</sup> Still another observer of the New Mexico affairs said that while visiting the Fort Stanton Reserve in 1875, he found able-bodied men "loafing about the agency with breech-loaders and carbines in their hands, though it was the planting season of the year when they should have been at work tilling the soil." The Mescalero Apache, charged with most of the Indian raids on Texas from New Mexico during this period, frequently complained of the treatment accorded them by their white neighbors. Arizona and New Mexico were being settled; immigrants were demanding that they be given lands which belonged to the Indians, and in order to satisfy this demand, it was necessary to adopt a policy of concentration in respect to Indian reservations.<sup>227</sup> This policy limited the bounds of the various tribes, collecting them on the fewest number of reserves.<sup>228</sup> In carrying out this policy, at times tribes hostile toward each other would be located on the same reserve.<sup>229</sup> The Mescaleros felt cramped on their new reserve and often com-

<sup>226</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1877, I, 61.

<sup>227</sup> See "Apache Relations in the Southwest from 1846-1886," by Bertha Blount in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XVIII, 20-39.

<sup>228</sup> Since heretofore they had roamed at will over the country, this restriction was hard to bear.

<sup>229</sup> The Coyoteris and Pinales were located on the San Carlos Reserve, even though they were hostile toward each other. A similar instance is found with the location of the Navajoes at Bosque Redondo where the Mescaleros had been located, as previously mentioned.

plained of the many restrictions placed on them which prevented them from resuming their old roving habits. Game was not plentiful until 1875 when their reserve was extended for a considerable distance to the southward.

During the fall of 1874, the Mescalero chiefs made frequent protests to W. D. Crothers, their agent, that white thieves were stealing their horses. Efforts were put forth by the agent to intercept and punish the thieves, but all attempts ended in failure.<sup>230</sup> At about the same time the Mescaleros were accused of raiding on the Pecos River, and when bands of citizens attacked the Indians while sleeping in their tents on the reservation, killing men, women, and children, they became alarmed and fled to the hills.<sup>231</sup> Captain E. G. Fechet, with a detachment of troops, was sent out from Fort Stanton with orders to bring in the runaway tribe, and when he succeeded in locating them, instead of trying to persuade them to return to their reservation, as he was instructed to do, he surprised them in an attack which resulted in killing several Indians and capturing a large number of horses.<sup>232</sup> The Indians were later visited by an employee of the agency and an Indian scout, who persuaded them to return to their reserve.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Report of W. D. Crothers, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, pp. 329-330.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>232</sup> The horses were later sold by the military authorities at Fort Stanton at about seven dollars per head.

<sup>233</sup> Crothers describes their return in the following words: "On



One of the most serious causes of trouble with the Mescaleros was the sale of intoxicating liquors by the white traders living at La Luz and Tularosa.<sup>234</sup> It was comparatively easy for these traders to sell to the Indians, even though the agent was constantly on the watch to guard against such illicit traffic.<sup>235</sup> Another cause for disturbance was because of the extension of the reservation, in October, 1875, southward across the mainly traveled road from the lower Rio Grande to the railroad termini, El Moro, La Junta, and Las Animas.<sup>236</sup> The reservation was so broad that it required two days for a traveler to cross it, thus making it necessary to spend two nights on the Indian reserve. This situation often resulted in friction between the two races, the Indians complaining that the whites stole from them and sometimes allowed their cattle and horses to graze on their fields of growing grain.<sup>237</sup>

their return it was heartrending to see a class of human beings so destitute of the common necessities of life; many of them almost naked and bearing marks of an outraged class of human beings." Report of W. D. Crothers, Mescalero Agent, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1875, p. 330.

<sup>234</sup> La Luz and Tularosa were towns near enough to the reservation to make it possible for traders to carry on surreptitiously this traffic. The Indians were very fond of intoxicating drinks, and sometimes gave a horse for a quart of liquor, see Report of F. C. Godfroy, Mescalero Agent, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1876, pp. 105-109.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 1877, p. 157. The agent also stated that his life had been threatened by the thieves because he sought to protect the Indians and their property rights.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 1878, xli.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, Report of Agent Godfroy, 107.



On the night of July 20, 1877, a band of lawless men from Texas raided the Mescaleros and drove off thirteen of their horses, and on August 11 the same band returned and stole from the agency twenty-three animals, including two mules. Lawlessness increased about the Mescalero Agency in 1878 to such an extent that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs classified it as anarchy. Contentions arose between the two hostile factions and the Mescaleros were attacked by parties from both sides. So persistent were these intrusions on their reservation that the Indians became alarmed, refusing to tolerate such conditions longer, and fled from their reservation. All efforts by the agent of the tribe to induce them to return ended in failure.

On March 15, 1879, S. A. Russell succeeded Godfroy<sup>238</sup> as agent of the Mescaleros. He found conditions very unsatisfactory, and in speaking of his charge he said that the Indians were "wild and reckless" when drunk.<sup>239</sup> Notwithstanding this discouragement, he entered upon the duties of his office with so much aggressiveness that he succeeded in locating Victorio, an outlaw Apache chief, and his band of Warm Springs Indians upon his reservation.

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<sup>238</sup> The Mescalero agents were as follows: Lorenzo Labadi, 1864-1869; A. C. Hennisee, 1869-1871; A. J. Curtis, 1871-1873; S. B. Bushnell, 1873-1874; W. D. Crothers, 1874-1876; F. C. Godfroy, 1876-1879; S. A. Russell, 1879-1881; and W. H. H. Llewellyn, 1881-1884 - see Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico*, xvii, 742.

<sup>239</sup> Report of Agent S. A. Russell, *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1879, p. 114. Victorio, a troublesome Southern Apache chief, had led raids on the settlements since 1864, *ibid.*

Victorio was not content to abide by the white men's restrictions; so after a short time he escaped from the reservation with all of his people. After having left the reserve he began to depredate about one hundred miles west of Fort Stanton, killing men, women, and children. Because of the success of this chieftain in eluding capture or defeat from the military expeditions sent against him, about two hundred and fifty of the more lawless Mescaleros slipped away from their reserve and joined him. This state of affairs caused those more peacefully inclined on the reservation to be greatly disturbed, since it was feared that this would prejudice the white people against them. Then too, while these forays were taking place in New Mexico, they were also on the increase on the Southwestern frontier of Texas. Well might they be alarmed, for the military commander of the Department of Texas laid the blame on their tribe for these hostile activities, and unquestionably the more warlike members of this tribe were at fault.<sup>240</sup>

The complicity of the Mescaleros in many of these depredations was founded on unquestioned proof, for in the operations of the year 1877, Captain P. L. Lee, with a troop of the Tenth Cavalry, came in contact with a band of these Indians near Lake Quemada, Texas, killing four and capturing six of them. Fifty-six head of mules and horses,

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<sup>240</sup> Report of Agent Russell, August 16, 1880, in *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1880.

fifteen lodges, and large quantities of powder, lead, dried meats, blankets, robes, etc., were taken.<sup>241</sup>

Again Lieutenant Bullis, on October 28, 1877, with thirty-seven men and Seminole scouts, left Fort Clark in search of raiders. He crossed the Rio Grande and found an Indian trail traversing a very deep cañon, and climbing to the top, the Apache were seen driving out a large herd of horses. When the marauders discovered the troops, they came down and hid themselves among the rocks near the river and opened fire on them. Thinking it unwise to engage them with the small force at his disposal, Lieutenant Bullis recrossed to the American side of the river on November 3, 1877.<sup>242</sup> Here his forces were joined by Captain S. B. M. Young with a detachment of troops from the Eighth Cavalry together with a number of Seminole scouts. It was decided to recross the river in search of the attacking warriors; so on November 10, the command left camp on the Pinto Creek, near Fort Clark, and moved to the Rio Grande.<sup>243</sup> The guides soon located the Indians near San Carlos in a very steep sided cañon. When the troops arrived, the

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<sup>241</sup> Annual Report of General Ord, Commander of Department of Texas, 1877-1879, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. Chapters iii and iv of C. J. Crane's *The Experiences of a Colonel of Infantry* are good in describing army life in the Big Bend country during this period.

<sup>242</sup> An interesting account of this expedition is given in a report printed by *The Galveston News*, January 16, 1878.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*; and *Post Returns*, Fort Clark, November, 1877. Captain Young served with distinction during rebellion of the Philippines and rose to prominence in army circles.

Indians, having taken fright, were on the move. The ravine formed a horse-shoe, and taking advantage of this, Lieutenant Beck, with one company of his command, at once deployed on one crest, and the Seminole scouts on another, where they commanded an egress to the cañon, while Captain Wells was ordered to occupy the other side. The latter officer, with his force, at once moved to take up his position when the Indians suddenly appeared, leading their ponies, and coming toward him at a distance of about two hundred yards. The latter, upon discovery of the troops in front of them, opened fire with their Winchesters, but when they were charged, they took flight, running down the hill, hotly pursued by all the troops. Lieutenant Geddes, with detachments of different companies, dismounted and followed the Indians closely, but the latter climbed to the top of a narrow cañon from which place of vantage they were able to hold up the advance. The firing of the soldiers, however, was so rapid and accurate that the guns of the enemy were silenced; but finally, as it was realized that the Indians were in a strong position, the troops withdrew.<sup>244</sup> The savages did not remain to dispute the position with the soldiers, but began a rapid retreat, leaving to the invaders seventeen horses, five mules, one burro, fifty-two deer skins, two buffalo robes, dried deer and horse meat, water kegs, saddles, bridles, lariats, and other

<sup>244</sup> *Post Returns of Fort Clark*, December, 1878, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

articles, some of which indicated that they were Indians from the Fort Stanton reservation. After burning everything which was of little value to the troops, on December 13 the scout returned to Fort Clark.<sup>245</sup>

The number of scouting parties were greatly increased in 1879, there being a total of one hundred and twenty expeditions sent out from the various Texas posts alone, covering 40,100 miles, or an increase of 18,740 miles over that covered in the same department in 1878. Troops were out continuously in the field and appreciable results were obtained in lessening the total number of Indian raids.

Two expeditions made in 1879 also proved the culpability of the Indians of the Fort Stanton reservation. One of these was undertaken by Lieutenant Bullis, Twenty-fourth Infantry, with fifteen men of the Fourth Cavalry and forty-two Seminole scouts. The expedition left camp on the Las Moras Creek, on January 31, 1879, and proceeded up the Rio Grande to the mouth of Sycamore Creek, thence in a northwesterly direction to San Felipe, at which place the command was reinforced by a detachment consisting of Company A, Fourth Cavalry, and twelve citizen packers. With this augmented force the advance was pushed on up Devil's River to Pecan Springs. From here a sergeant and four privates with Seminole scouts were

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<sup>245</sup> Report of General Ord for 1878, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



sent with mail for citizens living near old Fort Lancaster. The balance of the command continued on up the Pecos to Howard's Creek and thence across to Richland Creek. After reaching Independence Creek, February 12, the command was rejoined by the detachment sent out to carry the mail. An Indian trail was struck not far from this point, and was followed into New Mexico within two miles of the Fort Stanton Agency. Lieutenant Bullis requested of the agent that he surrender the marauders to him in order that he might carry them back to Texas for trial before the civil courts, but this he refused to do. Lieutenant McMartin, with a detachment of troops, also followed a predatory band of Apache to the Fort Stanton Reserve in August and demanded of the agent that the Indians be given up, but for the second time a refusal was given.<sup>246</sup>

The expeditions proving the guilt of the Fort Stanton Indians resulted in instructions being given by the Department of Interior on September 9, 1879, to the Indian agent at Fort Stanton to use every effort to arrest all Indians upon the Mescalero reservation who engaged in raiding; to restore all property taken by them; and to deliver the guilty ones to the "proper authorities" for punishment.<sup>247</sup> Commenting upon this order, General

<sup>246</sup> Enclosure marked "B" of General Ord's Annual Report, 1879, Lieutenant McMartin to Captain Van Valzah, MS., file no. 7008, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington; and Thrall's *Texas Handbook*, 1880, pp. 103-104.

<sup>247</sup> Annual Report of General Ord, 1878, MS., *loc. cit.* It seems



Ord said that the instructions were "good as far as they go, but as military officers, who pursue the Indian raiders, cannot, under the Act of Congress promulgated in General Orders, Number 71, Headquarters of the Army, A.G.O., Series of 1878, aid in executing the law, or punishing criminals, they are not the 'proper authorities.' Therefore I venture to suggest that some understanding in the matter be had with civil authorities in Texas."

Texas at this time was divided into five sub-districts; namely, that of the Rio Grande, including forts Brown, McIntosh, Ringgold Barracks, and San Diego, under the command of Colonel E. G. Otis; that of the Nueces, including forts Clark, Duncan, and the station of San Felipe, under the command of Colonel D. S. Stanley; the district of the Pecos which included forts Concho, Davis, Stockton, and Griffin, under the command of Colonel B. H. Grierson; the district of the Bravo, which included the sub-posts of Faver's Ranch, Mayer's Springs, and Camp Shafter; and San Antonio might be considered as a sub-district with headquarters' station there.

In order to meet the danger from the Apache forays on the Southwestern frontier, sub-posts were established. Santa Maria and Carrizo, sub-posts of Fort Brown, maintained a company of the Eighth Cavalry. New Spring, Piña Blanca, Seven

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that the friction which arose between the representatives of the War and Interior departments brought serious complications in respect to putting an end to Indian depredations.

Springs, Five Springs, and Eagle Springs, sub-posts to Fort Stockton, Davis and Concho, maintained detachments from the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry and the Tenth Cavalry as garrisons. This resulted in a barrier of troops on the frontier which gave protection to the scattered settlements and guarded against hostile Indians slipping between the widely separated posts to depredate on the ranches of that region.<sup>248</sup>

The effectiveness of the expeditions in the Department of Texas during the year 1880 is set forth in the annual report of General Ord. There were one hundred and five expeditions made in the department during that year. Of this number a total of 49,513 miles were covered, or an increase of 9513 miles over that of 1879. Necessarily such an enormous and almost incredible amount of territory covered entailed much suffering and many hardships on the part of the troops. On the other hand so effective was their scouting that only nine deaths at the hands of the Indians were reported by the commander of the department for this year.

Since the greater number of the expeditions were directed against the Fort Stanton Indians, it is necessary at this point to consider the punishment inflicted by the military officials on these Indians. Repeated warnings of just retribution in case they

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<sup>248</sup> Sub-posts were established in the district of the Pecos under instructions from Headquarters of the Department of Texas, dated April 30, 1878—Report of General E. O. C. Ord, 1879, and 1880, *loc. cit.*, MS., file 6602.

continued their depredations seemed to fall on deaf ears, and when it appeared that no other course would bring results, on March 18, 1880, while making preparations for the disposition of his troops in the field, Colonel Grierson received instructions to proceed without delay, with such force of cavalry as could be made available for the purpose, to the Mescalero Agency to assist in disarming them.<sup>249</sup> Colonel Grierson was instructed to time his departure so as to arrive at the agency on April 12, when he was to join his forces with those of General Hatch.

Numerous evidences of hostile activities in Texas by these Indians were discovered by Colonel Grierson as he advanced westward toward New Mexico.<sup>250</sup> A detachment of two companies of the Tenth Cavalry was sent in pursuit of a band of savages which had stolen some stock on the night of March 31 from citizens living near Pecos.<sup>251</sup> The trail of the marauders was followed through the White Sand Hills, and on April 2 the Indians were overtaken. While a violent sand-storm was raging, the troops attacked with the result that one Indian was killed and eight head of horses were

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<sup>249</sup> Report of Colonel Grierson concerning the activities of his district is included in the *Annual Report* of General Ord, 1880, MS., file no. 6602, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>250</sup> It was estimated at that time that the Mescaleros were responsible for two-thirds of the depredations in western Texas, see *San Antonio Daily Express*, May 8, 1880.

<sup>251</sup> General Ord's report, 1880, MS., file no. 6602, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

recovered. Continuing on toward Fort Stanton, the detachment rejoined the main column at the Black River just within New Mexico.<sup>252</sup>

On April 6, 1880, Company K of the Tenth Cavalry, under the command of Captain Thomas Lebo, was sent from this point to scout through the Guadalupe Mountains and thence northward via Bluewater to the central settlements on the Penasco, while the main column marched northward, via the Pecos and Seven rivers and thence in a westerly course to the same point. The troops were so disposed as to cover a belt of country over fifty miles wide; the intention being to see whether raids on the Texas frontier were carried out by the Mescaleros. The suspicions of the commanding officer were well justified when it was found that invariably, when Indian trails were found, they led toward the Mescalero Agency.

Captain Lebo, with his company, struck a fresh trail on April 7 and followed it through the Guadalupe Mountains and two days later surprised the Indians in an attack on their camp at Shakehand Springs, about forty miles south of the Penasco. A chief of the party was killed, four squaws and one child captured, and between twenty and thirty head of stock recovered. The camp, which was well supplied with provisions from the Mescalero Agency, was destroyed. A Mexican boy, Coyetan Garcia, who had been previously captured by the Indians, was recovered and later re-

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

turned to his parents living near Presidio del Norte.<sup>253</sup>

The entire command reached the Penasco on April 10, and on the next day the advance was continued, via Silver and Elk springs, and the headwaters of the Penasco. All along the line of march, signs of Indian marauding parties were numerous, and those leading through the Sacramento Mountains led directly to the Indian camp near the head of the Tularosa. On the morning of April 12, while Colonel Grierson was surrounding the camp, intending to drive the Indians into the agency, a courier came, post haste from the agent, to advise him that these Indians were peaceful, and that they had been allowed to pitch their camp in this location by the agent, S. A. Russell.<sup>254</sup> Colonel Grierson was further informed that the Indians had only that day been ordered to leave the Tularosa and come into the agency.

Leaving a company of cavalry at the mouth of the cañon leading from the direction of Silver Springs, Colonel Grierson moved to the head of the Tularosa and halted for a short time, until he was advised that the Indians were moving in, then he proceeded down the valley of the stream to the agency and reported to General Hatch for orders.<sup>255</sup> In order to give the Indians more time to get into the agency, the time limit was extended

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> The friction between the Indian Bureau and the military officers frequently made it difficult for the two departments to coöperate.

<sup>255</sup> Agent Russell, in his report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, on



two days and Colonel Grierson was instructed to place his men in camp and await further instructions.<sup>256</sup>

Undoubtedly the policy pursued by the Interior Department was inimical to the best interests of the Indians and the frontier people of Texas. The agency had become a sort of hospital for old infirm Indians and commissary for the women and children, while younger and more active braves spent their time in carrying out forays on the Texas and New Mexico frontiers from which they brought back stolen stock and other valuables to their homes. Even Victorio, one of the more untamable chiefs, together with his entire band of pillagers, was supplied by the agency with means of subsistence while the families of his braves were cared for by the agency at San Carlos.<sup>257</sup> This attitude of the Indian Bureau undoubtedly worked to the detriment of an effectual policy of law enforcement, and made the task of General Hatch a very embarrassing one. In whatever course he chose to follow, criticism was sure to come. In order to escape a part of the censure, the ability of the agent was relied upon to bring into the agency the Indians, but because of stormy weather on April 13-14, the time was extended from day to day, until April 15,

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August 16, 1880, mentioned the arrival of one thousand troops, and Indian scouts, under the command of Colonel Grierson.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* The Indian agent here gives an interesting analysis of the problem from the point of view of the Interior Department.

<sup>257</sup> Annual Report of General Ord, 1880, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



when a count revealed the fact that there were but three hundred and twenty Indians at the agency.

At the time disarmament was attempted, Nautzilla, a friend to the agent, was made head chief of the Mescaleros in place of Caballero, the old leader who had joined Victorio and his band of outlaws. Russell thought that with the aid of the new chieftain little trouble would be met with in rounding up the Indians and disarming them. General Hatch also thought that no trouble would be encountered and began moving his troops westward, leaving at the agency, in addition to the troops of Colonel Grierson, Company G, Fifteenth Infantry, under the command of Captain Steelhammer. On April 16, about ten o'clock, A.M., firing was heard south of the agency and runners soon arrived, bringing news that Indian scouts, under the command of Lieutenant Gatewood, had intercepted a band of Mescaleros driving off stock and killed two, returning the stock to the reservation. The agent was indignant at this news, claiming that the stock had strayed from the agency and that he had sent the Indians out to drive them back to the reservation.<sup>258</sup>

An agreement had been previously made by General Hatch and the agent that at one o'clock, P.M., on April 16, Captain Steelhammer's company would march to the Indian camps and the disarm-

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<sup>258</sup> Russell charged that General Hatch had "turned his Indians loose" on the Mescaleros, see Report of S. A. Russell, in *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1880, p. 129.

ing would there be effected. Colonel Grierson suggested that more troops be sent with those of Captain Steelhammer's, but when the agent said that it would be wholly unnecessary, it was agreed that should such troops be needed, three shots were to be fired in quick succession at the time disarmament was to occur.<sup>259</sup>

The disarming did not take place as easily as was first anticipated. The Indians became restive, not knowing what was going to happen, and becoming alarmed, sought to steal away. When Captain Steelhammer observed this movement he ordered that the signal shots agreed upon be fired with the result that other troops rushed up to help round up the fleeing Indians who were led in their flight by Nautzilla. After considerable fighting, in which several Indians were killed, a total of two hundred Mescaleros were rounded up and disarmed, but a large number succeeded in making their escape, joining Victorio and his band.

The Indians who surrendered were told that they would be taken care of; that though they must give up their arms and accoutrements of war, they would be properly rewarded if they would submit peacefully. This agreement was not kept. Those who surrendered were placed in a large stock pen, in which horses and cattle had been kept. The refuse from the pens was not even removed, and the disconsolate Indians were forced to put up with this indignity. When they would ask concerning

<sup>259</sup> *The Galveston Daily News*, May 8, 1880.

the return of horses, guns, etc., and their own release, noncommittal answers would be given. To be sure, this did not aid the officers in rounding up the other members of this tribe, and though the disarmed warriors were finally released from this imprisonment, they never afterwards had a very friendly attitude toward General Hatch.

On April 17, General Hatch decided to proceed in search of Victorio and his warriors, but in attempting to carry out this resolve he was confronted by obstacles on every hand. The topography of the territory to be scouted presented many perplexing problems. The face of the high, dry land of New Mexico is interspersed here and there by ranges of rough and almost inaccessible mountains, and the Indians with their intimate knowledge of this region, were able to find many hiding places from which they could steal forth on their mission of plunder.<sup>260</sup>

Even though there were these many hindrances to the carrying out of a successful campaign, General Hatch set about his work. Troops were dispatched in all directions in search of the marauders, but before considerable success could be had, Victorio and his warriors left New Mexico, thus relieving this federal officer of the responsibility of carrying out his task. As will be noted in the succeeding chapter, the credit for the defeat and final death of Victorio goes to Colonel Grierson and his troops, operating in the Big Bend district

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<sup>260</sup> General Ord's Report, 1880.

of Texas, and Mexican forces campaigning south of the Rio Grande.

The withdrawal of Victorio from New Mexico relieved that territory from serious Indian troubles for a time, and taking advantage of this breathing spell, many immigrants sought homes there, taking up unoccupied lands not claimed by the Indians. This period was only a breathing spell, however, for soon Geronimo and his hostile band of Apache depredated along the entire frontier of New Mexico and Arizona, and it was not until about 1890 that final peace and security came. By this time the savages had become adjusted to their new restrictions and had seriously taken up the task of learning the white man's ways of civilization.

# The Victorio War





## The Victorio War

After the disarming of the New Mexican tribes, Colonel Grierson returned to his district in the Department of Texas. The policy of disarming the Mescaleros had not accomplished all that was expected; the Indians of this region had been neither pacified nor considerably frightened, but to the contrary, they were more hostile toward the whites than formerly. This hostility was soon manifested on the Texas frontier. Small raiding parties reappeared in the southwestern portion of the state, and rumors of their bloody exploits held the frontier people in a state of constant dread and fear.

To guard against these dangers Colonel Grierson made the best disposition of his forces possible. Throughout the region of the Big Bend district he placed his troops at strategic points, yet he was quite aware that in doing so the task of providing for an adequate defense was a hopeless one. Broken by lofty mountains, dry cañons and ravines, and semi-arid wastes, this portion of the Southwestern frontier was vulnerable indeed.

In order to facilitate operations against the Indians and Mexican marauders, however, a new military road was made by the troops in 1880. Starting from the mouth of Devil's River, it ran

toward the mouth of the Pecos, and crossing there, thence westward to the base of the Chenati Mountains with a turning off at Piña Colorado to Fort Davis. This road reduced the distance from Fort Davis to San Antonio by about three hundred and ninety miles. The new District of the Bravo, which included this road and the region to the south of it, was placed under the command of Colonel W. R. Shafter.<sup>261</sup>

In the latter part of May, 1880, General Hatch reported that Victorio's band, reinforced by bands from the Mescalero Agency, was moving toward Fort Stanton with evident hostile intentions. Immediately, upon receipt of this news, Colonel Grierson was ordered to assist in rounding up the marauders. He was instructed to move at once into New Mexico with his entire force. Believing that Victorio had no intention of going into New Mexico, and unwilling to expose the frontier settlements of his district to the depredations of the Indians, Colonel Grierson telegraphed to General Ord on June 24, stating that it would be wiser to increase the force in the western part of the District of the Pecos, lying toward the Rio Grande and the Guadalupe Mountains.<sup>262</sup> Permission was asked to place his forces in this manner in order to intercept and punish the marauders.

<sup>261</sup> This was the same officer who commanded the American troops in operations about Santiago, Cuba, during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

<sup>262</sup> Annual Report of General Ord, Department of Texas, 1880, file no. 6602, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.





On June 28, Colonel Grierson was informed that his request had been granted, and immediately he set about making ready to meet an invasion from the south, and additional forces stationed at Fort Concho were called upon to aid in this scheme. The judgment of the commander of the district proved to be sound when it became known that Victorio had escaped from New Mexico to the region to the south and was at that time trying to beat back from Mexico into the Big Bend region which he thought to be poorly defended.<sup>263</sup>

As early as 1879, an agreement had been made by General Ord, commanding the Department of Texas, and General Trevino, commanding the Mexican army along the Rio Grande, whereby the operations of the two in respect to Indian forays were to be coördinated.<sup>264</sup> Under date of July 13, Colonel Valle, one of General Trevino's inferior officers, reported from Carrizal, Mexico, that his command, consisting of four hundred and twenty men, would take the field against Victorio, and that a force of one hundred and twenty cavalrymen was at that time on the trail of the Indians, which led toward Eagle Springs, Texas.

This information was received by Colonel

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<sup>263</sup> *Galveston Daily News* of June 12, 1880, speaks of precautionary measures being taken even before Colonel Grierson had received instructions to guard the Rio Grande frontier.

<sup>264</sup> Thrall, *Texas Handbook*, 1880, pp. 103-104. This coöperation of military expeditions against Victorio did not prevent Indian forays, as it might have, because of the lack of vigor of Mexican operations on the southern side of the Rio Grande.



Grierson while at Fort Davis, and immediately Lieutenant Mills, Twenty-fourth Infantry, then at Eagle Springs, was ordered to throw out his scouts along the Rio Grande, and instructions were also issued to officers commanding troops near Viejo Pass to take active command and be on the lookout for Indians. On July 23, news was brought that the Indians were then at Ojo del Piño, Mexico, about fifty miles southeast of Eagle Springs, near which point an engagement occurred between the Mexican forces and the Indians a few days previous to that time.<sup>265</sup> Shortly following the reception of this news, Colonel Valle confirmed the report of the engagement referred to, in which four Indians and three horses were killed, and further stated that he lost one man killed, three wounded, and ten or twenty horses taken by the Indians. Five days later Colonel Valle withdrew his forces from the vicinity of the savages toward Fort Quitman, arriving opposite that point, south of the Rio Grande, in a destitute condition. His troops had exhausted their supplies, and on account of this, had been without food for three days. Colonel Grierson, without waiting for permission to do so, turned over to the Mexican officer 1000 pounds of flour and 1130 pounds of grain, thus relieving his needy condition. This act was later approved by the proper authority of the Department of Texas.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>265</sup> *Galveston Daily News*, July 23, 1880, San Antonio news items.

<sup>266</sup> Report of General Ord, Department of Texas, 1880, MS., Old



Believing that the Indians would attempt to cross to the north side of the Rio Grande, Colonel Grierson left Fort Quitman on July 20, with the intention of intercepting the Indians. He was sagacious enough to know that the Indians would attempt to visit the water holes north of the Rio Grande and therefore placed himself with six men directly in the line of march of the savages toward the north. With Colonel Grierson at this time was his son who was on his summer vacation from school, in search of adventure. The Colonel, in humorously referring to his son's quest for excitement, said that "He found it."

On July 29, Colonel Grierson sent orders by a stage passing during the night for a company stationed at Eagle Springs and Fort Quitman to proceed immediately to his camp near the water hole of Tanaja de las Palmas. At one o'clock, A.M., on the next day, a courier brought a message saying that patrols had been fired upon and one scout killed.<sup>267</sup> The messenger said that the Indians were encamped at that time ten miles below the position occupied by the colonel and his small band. This was alarming news indeed, and again an order was sent to the detachments of Company A, Tenth Cavalry, located at points previously referred to, urging that they hasten up. When this order was

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Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington; and *Galveston Daily News*, July 23, 1880, "Victorio's Band Defeated."

<sup>267</sup> Report of Colonel Grierson, District of Pecos, 6602, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. Tanaja de las Palmas was between Fort Quitman and the Rio Grande.

received at Fort Quitman it was wholly misunderstood, as it was thought that the colonel was asking for an escort to conduct him back to the fort; so instead of the entire company being sent out, Lieutenant Finley, with fifteen men, reported at four o'clock on the same day to conduct him to safety. Two of these men, however, were sent back to the post with the peremptory order for all available cavalry to hasten up.<sup>268</sup>

While Colonel Grierson was awaiting the arrival of the forces from Fort Quitman and Eagle Springs, about nine o'clock, A.M., the Indians were seen approaching in force, but when they observed the strong position which the soldiers occupied, they began to deploy as though about to begin an enveloping movement. Seeing his danger, Colonel Grierson ordered Lieutenant Finley with ten men to charge and engage the savages. The latter immediately carried out the order, charging a vastly superior force, and for almost an hour held them in check, giving time for Captain Viele to come up with his company from Fort Quitman.

An unfortunate incident occurred here, however, when Lieutenant Finley and his men were mistaken for Indians by the excited troops coming up and fired upon, though happily no one was killed as a result of the mistake. The Lieutenant was forced to withdraw his men, who were hotly

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* A brief account is also found in *Hostile Indians, Military Division of the Missouri*, 1882, pp. 110-111, Report prepared by Military Division of Missouri.

pursued by the Indians who sought to prevent the juncture of the forces coming up with those on the field; however, they were engaged in a spirited battle by Captain Viele and his men and forced back to their original position. Here the Indians were almost surrounded and forced to withdraw a portion of their men to meet a new danger in the arrival of Captain Nolan and a fresh detachment hastening up from Fort Quitman. The latter officer joined in the engagement, and since the invaders were outnumbered and outflanked, they fled precipitately from the field. In this engagement of four hours the Indians lost seven killed and a large number wounded which were carried from the field. The losses of the troops were one soldier killed and Lieutenant S. R. Calladay wounded.<sup>269</sup>

Being of the opinion that the Indians would next make an attempt to pass north of him near Bass's Cañon, Colonel Grierson increased his force at Eagle Springs by ordering Company F, Tenth Cavalry, from Fort Stockton, Company K, Eighth Cavalry, from Fort Davis, while Company K, of the same regiment, was to scout through the Carrizo and Sierra Diablo Mountains.<sup>270</sup>

The Indians, who had retreated into Mexico, now crossed the Rio Grande for the second time, and four days after the fight at Tanaja de las Palmas, had an encounter with a detachment of cavalry and scouts near the Rio Grande at a place desig-

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

nated as the Alamo.<sup>271</sup> One soldier was wounded and several of Victorio's warriors were wounded but carried from the field by their comrades. Hearing this news, Colonel Grierson, with his entire force, sought to head them off at Bass's Cañon, but soon learned that his wiry foe had eluded him, slipping through the Van Horn Mountains on the evening of August 4. The Colonel at once began a rapid march in a parallel direction, keeping a range of mountains between him and the unsuspecting Indians. The accomplishment of this task was arduous indeed. In a period of twenty-four hours the troops marched sixty-five miles, and arrived at Rattlesnake Springs at 11:45 P.M., well in advance of the oncoming Indians.

During the night the position of the Indians was ascertained and early on the morning of August 6, two companies under the command of Captain Viele, were placed in Rattlesnake Cañon to await the arrival of the hostile warriors. At two o'clock the Indians were seen approaching, and the troops held their fire until it was evident that the enemy would come no nearer, then a volley was poured into their ranks. The marauders were greatly surprised and discomfited on discovering that they had been outwitted by their enemy, and being unable to make a show of resistance, fled from the field. They soon recovered from their surprise,

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<sup>271</sup> This place is not to be confused with the Alamo of Texas Revolution fame. The spot referred to in this instance was located near Eagle Springs, Texas.

however, and seeing the small force disputing their advance, attempted to work their way to the water hole in the cañon, which was jealously guarded by the troops. Before they could go very far in carrying out this scheme, two additional companies of troops arrived on the scene and poured a volley into their ranks. The Indians did not attempt to stand in the face of this new attack and once more fled to the protection of the rugged slopes of the ravine.<sup>272</sup>

Two hours later a wagon train was seen approaching the cañon guarded by a company of the Tenth Cavalry, and as it rounded a point of the mountains and came in view, the Indians sought to capture it. Again they were astonished at the resistance with which they met, and were sent flying back to their former position after having suffered a loss of one killed and several wounded. Thus, being surprised and defeated on three occasions, the bewildered warriors fled toward the Carrizo Mountains, pursued by the troops under Captain Carpenter. It is not known just how many Indians were killed in these skirmishes, owing to the broken character of the country over which the engagements were fought, which enabled the Indians to carry from the field all their dead and wounded.

Shortly after the Indians were driven from the the field, a courier arrived bringing the news that on August 4, a detachment of troops under the

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<sup>272</sup> An interesting account of this encounter is given in *The Galveston Daily News*, August 12, 1880.



command of Captain Kennedy was attacked by the Indians while they were following a trail north of Bowen's Springs, in the Guadalupe Mountains, and that for two hours the troops held their position, inflicting a loss of several killed and wounded on their foes and with the loss of but one soldier. Colonel Grierson immediately dispatched Captain Carpenter with three companies of the Tenth Cavalry to Sulpur Springs, near the "Salt Plains," to prevent the Indians from having access to the water and to scout the country as far as practicable. Captain Nolan, with his company, was sent toward the Carrizo Mountains, and Captain Lebo, with still another detachment, was ordered to scout through the mountains between Rattlesnake Cañon and Sulphur Springs. This latter band encountered Victorio a few days later and administered a defeat, capturing from him his entire supply train, consisting of twenty-five head of cattle, a substitute for bread made of maguey and other plants, berries, etc., also a large supply of beef on pack animals, and other camp equipment. Captain Lebo pursued the Indians as far as the Guadalupe Mountains and in returning scouted the west side of this range.

The Indians were given no rest. Everywhere they turned they met with a warm reception at the hands of the troops. Though they attempted several times to slip by the alert guards on the Rio Grande, they were turned back with a heavy loss, and at last broken and demoralized they recrossed



to the southern side of the river and sought to escape in the mountainous region found there.

On August 18, Charles Berger, an interpreter and scout, with Lipan and Pueblo scouts, was sent into Mexico on the trail of the dispirited savages. His task was to locate them and to learn if possible their condition. After following the trail as far as the Candelaria Mountains, he returned bringing the report that the Indians were located at Lake Guzman, driving their animals before them, avoiding their usual trails and passing over the roughest country to be found there. He further reported that, though the Indians were badly crippled, the Mexican troops had given them a clear passage westward, and that had they attacked them when they recrossed to the southern side of the Rio Grande, they would have succeeded in killing or capturing the entire band.<sup>273</sup> Colonel Grierson, in commenting on the latter part of the report of his scout, said: "There seems to be a tacit understanding between Victorio and many Mexicans, that so long as he does not make war upon them in earnest, he can take whatever food and other supplies he may need for his warriors."<sup>274</sup> They know that he and his marauders belong to the United States, and think that our government should keep them at home and prevent them from raiding and invading their territory."<sup>275</sup>

<sup>273</sup> *The Galveston Daily News* of August 28, 1880, speaks of Victorio's band being broken and dispirited.

<sup>274</sup> Colonel Grierson's report, 1880, previously referred to.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

Stung by such criticism the Mexican commander of the Rio Grande district dispatched Colonel Juakin Terrazas with one thousand troops to intercept and punish the marauders. He was soon joined by Lieutenant Parker with sixty-eight Chiricahua Apache scouts, Lieutenant Manney with a force of twenty negro troops, and Colonel George W. Baylor with a force of twenty Texas Rangers.<sup>276</sup>

Victorio and his band were located in the Tres Costillos Mountains and the combined American and Mexican forces prepared to go into action, when, to the surprise of the American officers, Colonel Terrazas demanded that they withdraw their troops to the American side of the Rio Grande, claiming that the Chiricahua scouts were related to Victorio and that he could not trust them. Very much discouraged at this turn of affairs, the American officers withdrew their men as requested, but within twenty-four hours after they began their march a courier overtook them, bringing the report that the Indians had been defeated in battle, and Mauricio, a Tarahumar Indian soldier, had proven his reputation as a long range rifle shot by slaying Victorio as he was directing his men from one of the elevated positions on the battle field.<sup>277</sup>

The report of the engagement was soon verified

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<sup>276</sup> Colonel Baylor and his Texas Rangers rendered valiant service in this Victorio War. This officer was one of the most noted men in the history of the Ranger organization.

<sup>277</sup> Raht, *Romance of the Davis Mountains and the Big Bend Country*, 271.

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and so pleased was the Governor of Chihuahua at this noted exploit that he presented Victorio's slayer with a nickel-plated rifle. Well might he be pleased for one of the greatest scourges of the Rio Grande frontier was thus eliminated.



The Buffalo as a Factor in the Development of the Southwest





## The Buffalo as a Factor in the Development of the Southwest

Of all the factors having to do with the disappearance of the Southwestern frontier, none was more important than the slaughter of the vast herds of bisons, or buffaloes, as they are more commonly called. Up until 1878, these great shaggy animals roamed over the Southwestern plains in herds of thousands and tens of thousands, moving about from place to place as the seasonal changes of climate and grazing conditions of the plains demanded.

As early as the Spanish period of exploration in the Southwest these great herbivorous animals were a source of considerable wonderment and amazement to the *Conquistadors*. In 1540, shortly after Coronado had reached the pueblo villages of New Mexico, he dispatched one of his captains with a detachment of men toward the east to make observations. The captain soon returned to New Mexico bringing the surprising news that all he had been able to see on his reconnaissance was "cows and the skies."<sup>278</sup>

This scarcely creditable story was soon verified

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<sup>278</sup> See Castenada's account in Winship's (ed.) *Journey of Coronado*, 505.

by Coronado when he pushed forth from the pueblo villages toward the east. Innumerable herds of buffaloes were found peacefully grazing upon the great level stretches of the Staked Plains. Coronado and his band killed hundreds of these animals and to his surprise found that their meat was quite palatable. As they pushed on eastward, at times these herds became so dense that it was necessary for the explorers to deviate in their course because of the disinclination of the animals to move on.<sup>279</sup> In July, 1583, Antonio de Espejo, while crossing the western part of Texas, arrived on the banks of the Pecos River, and because of the large number of buffaloes to be found in this region, he called the stream *Rio de las Vacas*.

The various uses the Indians had for the buffaloes are interestingly set forth by these early explorers. They lived in the wake of the great herds as they moved about from place to place. The red man's shelter was the tepee made by stretching the hides of these animals over upright poles, tied together at the top. They were found dressed in clothing made from the skins of these animals, and

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<sup>279</sup> Whether or not there were as many of the bison on our plains during this period as during the latter part of the nineteenth century, is a question which cannot be solved, since there is no basis of comparison. This is true, however: all the explorers coming to the region of the Southwest during these early centuries reported great herds of these animals throughout this region, and that they were the principal source of food supply for the nomadic Indians of this country just as they were at a later time. It would seem, too, that their range extended farther toward the south during this early period than during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

their bowstrings, lariats, moccasins and quivers were also at times made from the same material. Sometimes, when it was not possible to find wood for fires, the savages cooked their food over fires made from the dried excrement of the animals, or the *bois de vache*, as the French *voyageurs* termed it. At times, however, they did not go to the trouble of making a fire; they ate their meat raw. Castenada, in describing one of their practices, said: "They empty a large gut and fill it with blood, and carry it about their necks to drink when thirsty. When they open the belly of the cow, they squeeze out the chewed grass and drink the juice that remains behind, because they say it contains the essence of the stomach." Thus, they not only used the bison for food, but for shelter, fuel, clothing, drink, medicine and lariats as well.<sup>280</sup>

So long as the Indians were not molested by these invaders they felt secure in the possession of their hunting grounds, but, with the passing of the exploration period, the white men from Mexico on the south and the United States on the east began to make serious inroads on the hunting grounds of the red men. During the first part of the nineteenth century the savages became more and more alarmed with these serious threats on their domain. Therefore, when the last quarter of this century dawned, they were in decided opposition to the encroachments of the whites.<sup>281</sup> To cease their an-

<sup>280</sup> Winship, *op. cit.*, 528.

<sup>281</sup> *Personal Memoirs of General P. H. Sheridan*, II, 282.

cient practice of hunting the buffaloes was unthinkable to these nomadic red men; therefore with every means at their command they prepared to resist the unwarranted interference of the white men. General P. H. Sheridan said at a later time that it was the principal cause of Indian depredations in the Southwest, and undoubtedly this was true.<sup>282</sup>

The habits of the buffaloes were such as to make it easy for the hunters to slay them. Usually while grazing they roamed in dense herds of hundreds and thousands, each herd frequently breaking up into smaller droves of about twenty or fifty. In regard to the denseness of these herds while grazing, General Nelson A. Miles on one occasion said: "I think it safe to say that from the crest of a mesa or some high butte I have frequently seen from 20,000 to 30,000 within a radius of ten or fifteen miles."<sup>283</sup> During the winter campaign of 1868 against the Kiowa and Comanche the soldiers marching southward encountered vast herds of these animals. It was necessary for the men to march for hours through these dense herds and by reason of these animals pushing down on the wagon train and frightening the mules, it became necessary for General Sheridan to throw out flankers to shoot the leading bulls and thus turn off the herds. Following close upon the heels of this

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> *Personal Recollections of General Nelson A. Miles*, 123.

herd was a large pack of ravenous wolves which fell upon the buffaloes shot by the soldiers and soon devoured them.<sup>284</sup> In the same year, William Blackmore of London, England, who had spent several years on the plains, said that he had ridden for a distance of one hundred and twenty miles through an almost unbroken herd, and that from a small hill near Monument Station, Kansas, with the help of an opera-glass, he could see nothing in any direction but the shaggy bodies of buffaloes quietly grazing on the plains.

The bison was characterized by Colonel R. I. Dodge as being the most unwieldy, sluggish, and stupid of animals on the plains. In connection with this point he said that when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad was building across the western plains these animals would often stand but a hundred yards away and stupidly gaze at a train. If on one side of a track, they would often try to cross to the other and in doing so would many times run against the engine, cars, or try to squeeze between them, "each individual buffalo went at it with the desperation of despair, plunging against or between locomotive and cars, just as the blind madness chanced to take them."<sup>285</sup> After ditching a few trains, the officials learned to stop and allow

<sup>284</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, 325. As the larger herds moved about from place to place there were generally to be found, following in their wake, great packs of coyote and lobo wolves. Those of the latter type were so strong and vicious as to be able to successfully attack the calves or infirm buffaloes and bring them to the ground.

<sup>285</sup> *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, August 5, 1875.



herds to pass by, often being held up for long periods of time by so doing.

Although they were stupid in some respects, yet in others the buffaloes seemed to be possessed with a considerable degree of acumen. Especially was this true in the organization of the herd. When the animals began grazing in the morning, the cows and calves would be found near the center of the herd with the bulls on the outside as guards. If a hunter or strange animal approached, these old bulls would make a great show of hostility by pawing the ground and throwing dust in the air with their horns, roaring in the meantime; yet, if they were approached, they would break and flee with the herd. The herds were continually shifting during the day, but though this was true, when they broke up into smaller herds, they still maintained their leaders. What had been one herd in the morning, before the day was spent, would often be ten or fifteen herds, each seeming to move with military precision with leaders well in advance, or on the side of each. The bulls were the guardians of each herd, leading in the stampede, or in an attack on a vicious lobo which might venture too near in its quest for food. At times jealousy seemed to pervade the minds of the masculine sex of these animals and they would engage in deadly combats to decide which would be the leader of a group, and the defeated one would tamely submit to the mastery of the other.

A herd of buffaloes made an interesting sight as



it made its way to water. Marching in single file, led by one of the bulls, they would at times make a line of more than a mile in length. Because of this custom deep paths were cut out across the plains, and almost invariably each led to water. Lives of hunters and explorers were often saved by following these paths to the water holes.<sup>286</sup> Many times these water holes were created by the buffaloes themselves, concerning the process of which one writer gives the following account:

Finding in the low parts of the prairies a little stagnant water amongst the grass, and the ground underneath soft and saturated with moisture, an old bull lowers himself upon one knee, plunges his horns into the ground, throwing up the earth and soon making an excavation into which water trickles, forming for him in a short time a cool and comfortable bath, in which he wallows "like a hog in the mire." In this "delectable laver" he throws himself flat upon his side, and then, forcing himself violently around with his horns, his feet and his huge hump, ploughs up the ground still more, thus enlarging his pool till he at length becomes nearly immersed. Besmeared with a coat of this pasty mixture, he at length rises, changed into "a monster of mud and ugliness," with the black mud dripping from his shaggy mane and thick woolly coat. The mud soon drying upon his body forms a covering that insures him immunity for hours from the attacks of insects. Others follow in succession, having waited their turns to enjoy the luxury; each rolls and wallows in a similar way, adding a little to the dimensions of the hole, and carrying away a share of the adhesive mud.<sup>287</sup>

The habits of these animals had much to do with

<sup>286</sup> W. C. Holden, "The Buffalo of the Plains Area," in *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook* for 1926, p. 10.

<sup>287</sup> J. A. Allen's "History of the American Bison," in *Ninth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of*

their destruction. Hunters took advantage of them by creeping up on hands and knees with a covering resembling the skin of a wolf, or by lying in wait at the water-holes and killing them as they came to drink. Many times approaches to the water-holes were met with bullets from the guns of the hunters hidden on the opposite side. One writer gives us a very interesting scene of the butchery which took place in 1874 along the banks of the South Platte. The country to the south of this stream was dry in the summer of this year, and taking advantage of this situation the hunters hid themselves on the north bank of the stream. Time after time the starving buffaloes would come down to the river to slack their thirst only to be driven back, leaving dozens of their fellows beside the water's edge. Taking advantage of these poor animals in this manner, the hunters were able to destroy an entire herd, often keeping up the firing, both day and night for four days at a time. The writer sums up his graphic account as follows: "Every drink of water, every mouthful of grass, is at the expense of life, and the miserable animals, continually harassed, are driven into localities far from their natural haunts,—anywhere to avoid the unceasing pursuit."<sup>288</sup>

*the Territories, embracing Colorado and parts of adjacent territories: being a report of the exploration for the year 1875*, p. 469. This article is not only one of the best which has been written on this subject, but in connection with it the citations give to the students in this field an excellent bibliography.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting Baird's *Annual Record of Science and Industry for 1874*, p. 304.

The destruction of the buffaloes was not entirely incident to the settlement of the Indian problem, though it was recognized by the military authorities that no permanent settlement could be made of the frontier situation until the Indians' native food supply was gone, and until the wild buffaloes were replaced by more numerous herds of tame cattle, and the latter aim could not be realized until the millions of bisons were driven from the plains of the Southwest.<sup>289</sup>

The exact number of these huge animals which roamed our western plains will never be known, since they were to be found in such vast herds as to be beyond enumeration, even had such an attempt been made. General Sherman said that the plains were the pasture fields of about 10,000,000 buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope,<sup>290</sup> but this approximation is but a very rough estimate. The nearest approach to the number which inhabited the plains during the time of their annihilation are the figures given of their hides shipped to market. General Nelson A. Miles estimated that 5,373,730 were slaughtered in the Southwest during the years 1872-1875. This, to be sure, does not include the far greater slaughter during the years 1877-1880. From December, 1877, to January, 1878, it is estimated that 100,000 were killed in Texas alone, and during the first year mentioned, 200,000 hides were hauled from the west Texas plains to Fort Griffin, one of sev-

<sup>289</sup> *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, II, 413-414.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

eral important buffalo posts. On the basis of General Miles's calculations it is quite probable that there were more than 6,000,000 buffaloes in the southern herd.

As has been said, the principal cause of the destruction of the buffaloes was not the desire to make room for the cattle industry, as some would have us believe, though it was recognized by all military authorities that no permanent settlement of the Indian problem, or occupation of the country, could be effected without this result. The more evident purpose of those bringing it about was the commercial benefit to be derived in the sale of their hides. The flesh of the animals was sold in considerable quantities, but it is very doubtful that satisfying the full demands of the market for buffalo meat would have materially diminished the vast numbers of these animals. Hides usually brought from \$1.00 to \$3.75. Thus, for a buffalo hunting outfit consisting of three to seven men, each skinner in the party taking from twenty to fifty hides in a day, it is readily seen what surprising profits were made in a commercial venture of this kind.

It would be difficult to say just when the commercialization of the hides of these animals was started. Frequent mention is made of the traffic in buffalo robes by early newspapers. As early as 1835, Josiah Gregg makes mention of the slaughter of the large numbers of buffaloes for their hides and tongues, and expressed his opinion that unless

this practice was stopped the buffaloes would soon become extinct.<sup>291</sup> Fremont, in 1845, published some data furnished him by a Mr. Sanford, a partner of the American Fur Company, in which he said that the Indians had furnished several fur companies in that region, for "the preceding eight or ten years" with 90,000 hides annually, or approximately 720,000 in that period of time. Seven years after this date Professor Beard wrote that "the estimated number of buffalo robes sent to Saint Louis in 1850 is 100,000." Then in 1857, the sales of robes to the trading posts of the upper Missouri were as follows: at Fort Benton, 3000 bales, or 36,000 robes; at Fort Union, 2700 or 3000 bales, or about 30,000 robes; at Fort Pierre, 1900 bales, or 19,000 robes; giving a total in one year of about 75,000 robes sold to the traders there alone.<sup>292</sup> Concerning one of these early hunting parties, Mr. Ross, in his history of the Red River settlement, said the number of hunters engaged in the year 1840 was six hundred and twenty for two months, who were accompanied by six hundred and twenty women, and three hundred and sixty boys and girls, the party numbering altogether sixteen hundred and thirty souls. He stated that the party was armed with seven hundred and forty guns, and carried with them eleven hundred and fifty-eight horses, and a herd of five hundred and eighty-six draught oxen, with other equipment in proportion.

<sup>291</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, II, 213.

<sup>292</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, 562.



During the first two races after the buffaloes no less than twenty-five hundred were killed, and only about one-third of these were utilized.<sup>293</sup> In 1861, Dr. Hayden says that as near as he could determine, about 100,000 robes were annually made by the Indians of the upper Missouri country.<sup>294</sup> Thus, it is safe to say that the industry in buffalo hides had assumed vast proportions before 1850.

Undoubtedly the successful tanning of buffalo hides by eastern concerns and the operations of W. C. Lobenstein and Company at Fort Leavenworth, hastened the extermination of the buffaloes. When it became known generally that there were good wages to be made in killing and skinning these animals, large numbers of hunters flocked to the Western plains.

In 1871, J. Wright Mooar, who was at Fort Hayes, Kansas, wrote to his brother, John Mooar of New York, that a Mr. White had shipped to him some buffalo hides for the purpose of finding a market and that he was forwarding this consignment to New York.<sup>295</sup> Immediately upon receiving this letter, John Mooar visited the firm of J. J. Bate and Company, fur dealers, who told Mooar that since there was no market for such hides, no price could be offered for them, but that he would inspect them upon arrival. While the hides were being transferred from the freight yards to the

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<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, quoted by Allen, 564.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>295</sup> Paddock, B. B., *History of North and West Texas*, I, 111.



warehouse at 91 Pine Street, a Pennsylvania tanner chanced to see the wagon bearing them. He became deeply interested in them, and following the wagon to its destination, made a bargain with Mooar, at \$3.50 each, whereby he became the owner of the consignment. After he had made a successful experiment on them, he gave Mooar an additional order for 2000. Naturally, the price rose with the increased demand until the slaughter of the animals became a matter of organized effort on the part of thousands of hunters.

In 1874 the Mooar brothers moved to Texas, and, using Fort Griffin as a base, they established a camp about where Haskell, Texas, now stands, and there continued their operations. The first load of hides gathered here were sold to Lobenstein and Company. They were hauled by wagon from Fort Griffin to Denison, the nearest railway shipping point, and thence northward over the Missouri, Kansas and Texas for Kansas.<sup>296</sup>

The most successful hunting parties consisted of one hunter and about six "strippers," though there were many outfits with fewer in number. The time usually selected for taking the animals was just after they had been grazing in the morning, after they had gone to water and then returned to the high ground, lying down to rest in herds of from twenty to one hundred.<sup>297</sup> The hunter would ride a horse and bringing up the rear, in a wagon, would

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>297</sup> Miles, *op. cit.*, 134-135.

come the "strippers." When the hunter arrived at a point where he deemed it as close as he could go in this manner, he would dismount and stealthily approach in a crouching position or on "all-fours" until he was well within shooting distance of the herd. Then hiding behind tall grass or a clump of bushes, he would begin his deadly work by so firing as to cause the herd to mill about; then with his long range "Sharps" rifle, raised on a tripod, he would carry out his work of destruction. When a sufficient number of animals had been killed to employ the skimmers for the remainder of the day, the hunter would cease firing.<sup>298</sup>

The building of the Union Pacific, Kansas Pacific, and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé railroads accelerated the destruction of the buffaloes. These roads offered numerous points of projection for eager hunters into the buffalo country, whereas before this time it was necessary for them to travel long distances. At the time of the completion of the Santa Fé to Dodge City, on September 23, 1872, the principal trade of the town consisted in "out-fitting of hunters and exchange for their game." From the various towns along these railroads, thousands of hunters braved the perils of Indian attacks in order to share in the exciting venture of buffalo hunting.

The hide industry was so profitable that by the

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<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.* The tripod was used as a gun rest which made it possible to continue firing after the barrel of the gun would become hot from constant shooting.

winter of 1878, these hunters, in outfits from three to seven in number, covered the plains from Camp Supply on the north to the Concho River on the south, and from Fort Griffin on the east to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains on the west. So thriving did the business become that on January 14, 1877, a visitor to Fort Griffin said that F. E. Conrad's general merchandise store reported its sales for the day at \$4,000 and that \$2,500 of this amount had been in guns and ammunition. Since this was only one of the many buffalo hunters' supply camps it is readily seen how gigantic became this industry. Such points as Adobe Walls, Anderson's Supply Camp, Big Spring, Camp Reynolds, in Texas, and several stations north of the Red River in the Indian Territory and Kansas, were thriving supply points for the buffalo hunters.

The spectacle of this peculiar industry has never been paralleled before in the history of the world. In the market towns and concentration points would be huge stacks of dried buffalo hides, piled almost as high as houses. In the camps of the hunters would be found great piles of hides awaiting shipment, and others littering the ground, staked out, going through a drying process. Between these camps and the shipping points were caravans of wagons, drawn by oxen, mules, and horses, wending their way across dim trails, and at times across the trackless prairies.

The volume of this business became so great that railways, and even steamship lines entered into

competition for the traffic. During one year of this period the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad shipped 750,000 hides over its line eastward to market.<sup>299</sup> What had originally been a peaceful grazing domain for these animals became a veritable slaughter ground. When the animals became wild, the hunters stationed themselves at the water holes and continued their deadly work as the poor beasts, half famished for water, risked the riflemen in order to satisfy their thirst. By 1880 the southern herd<sup>300</sup> became practically extinct, although a few were seen in the Southwest after this time.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century came the last phase of the buffalo industry. The bisons were gone but their bleaching bones were to be found scattered over the broad plains from Kansas to Texas. These were gathered up by the land holders, who came in following the cutting up of the free range, and carried to market. They were hauled to various railway stations and loaded into freight cars to be shipped east to fertilizer production plants. Within a period of three years the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad carried

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* Miles took this estimate from Colonel Richard Irving Dodge.

<sup>300</sup> The great herd of buffaloes on the western plains was divided about 1849 by California overland immigration. The great overland route followed up the Kansas and Platte rivers, crossing the Rocky Mountains via South Pass. The increase in travel and the building of the Union Pacific Railroad, and opening up the country to settlement were other factors bringing about the division of the herd. Allen, *op. cit.*, 532.

over its line 1,350,000 tons, valued at \$8.00 per ton, or \$10,800,000.

As regrettable as the destruction of the buffaloes may be, undeniably the disappearance of these animals from our western plains hastened the coming of civilization to the Southwest. So long as the Indians could depend on this animal for their food supply they looked with resentment upon efforts made by the federal government to supervise their activities, but when their native food supply had vanished, and they were thrown upon the dependence of federal authorities for food and raiment, they were more disposed to tolerate reservation life. Then again, when the plains area was freed from the control of the wild savages and buffaloes, the ranching industry became a civilizing agency, which hastened the transformation of the vast stretches of unoccupied land into a thriving, civilized cattle and farming region.





## Problems of Frontier Life



## Problems of Frontier Life

Living in the twentieth century one can hardly imagine the difficulties and hardships incident to frontier life. The romantic and novel character of the frontier, interests the reader of Southwestern history to such an extent as to cause him or her to forget that along with the glamour of its colorful border life went hardships, dangers, inconveniences, and problems to challenge the most sterling qualities of the early settlers. The heroism of the fearless rangers and government troops in carrying out Indian campaigns was matched by efforts of the determined settlers, both men and women, in solving the number of frontier problems which confronted them. Inadequate communication and transportation, building of homes, supplying the family with food, combating the ravages of sickness and disease, enduring the loneliness of isolation because of a lack of frequent social contact, poor educational and religious advantages, and the appalling task of conquering the frontier environment, were such problems to be solved by all those who pushed out beyond the line of well settled areas in the Southwest.

By reason of the vastness of the Southwest proper means of communication and transportation

were problems difficult indeed to solve. So rapidly moved the vanguard of the frontier that its outermost settlements were at times more than one hundred miles in advance of well settled counties to the rear. At the most of these places the arrival of the mail formed a part of the little excitement of the people. The coming of the stages were usually anticipated by eager crowds, all desiring to learn of what was going on in the "civilized world." Many times those who collected for such purposes were forced to turn away disappointed because of the failure of the stage to put in its appearance. As an instance of this character, a writer at Fort Concho in 1873, says:

We have been without mail during the last three or four weeks and but little hope is entertained of getting in possession of it for some time to come; all the animals of the different stage routes are affected and sick from the epizoutic, and therefore unable to travel, which causes great disturbances in business circles. This is rather disagreeable to everybody as the arrival of the United States Mail forms a part of the little excitement on this isolated post and the mail is always eagerly expected.<sup>301</sup>

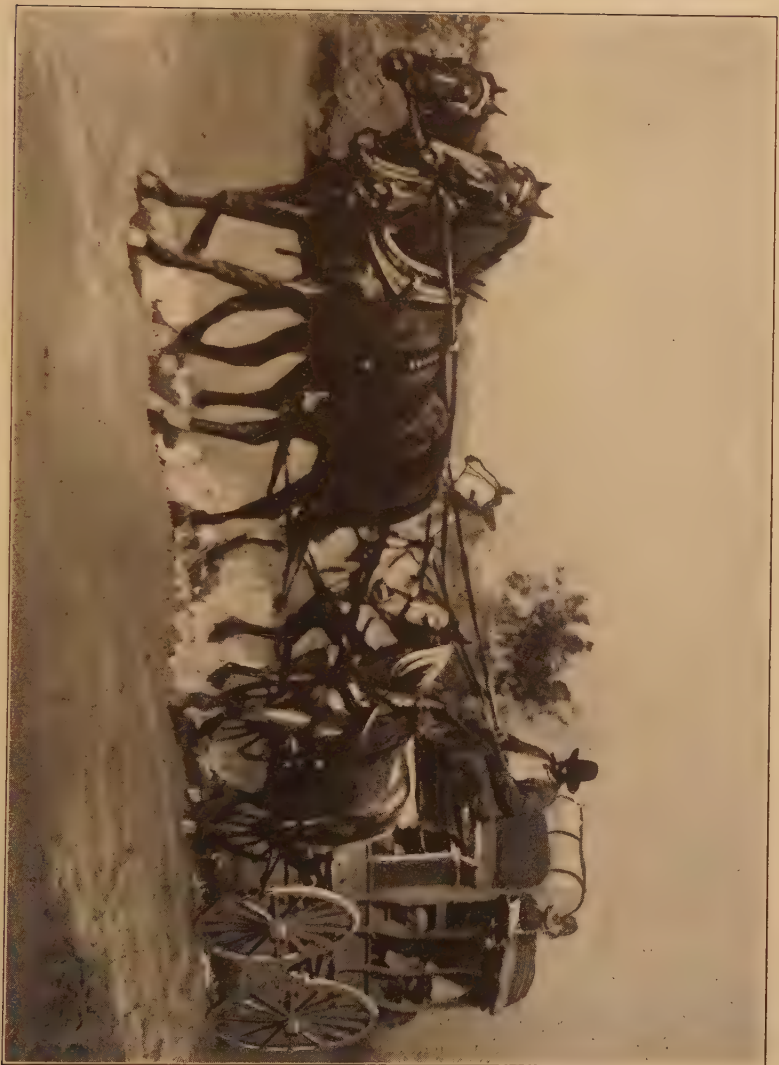
Many times the stages were held up on account of the marauding activities of the Indians and white thieves who found it not a difficult matter to ambush the stages in the rough country through which the road frequently ran. When this was done, it was comparatively easy for the pillagers to make their escape.<sup>302</sup> In addition to these delays, periods

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<sup>301</sup> *Fort Concho, Military History of Post*, vol. 206, p. 81.

<sup>302</sup> For reference to delays of this kind see *Medical History of Fort*

TRAVELLING BY STAGE-COACH ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER







of rainy weather in the winter and spring would often force the travellers to camp by the side of swollen streams for several days before resuming their journey.<sup>303</sup> There were no bridges across any of the streams traversing the frontier; consequently what were dry gulches and ravines during normal weather became impassable barriers of torrential waters during these seasons.

Travelling in stage-coaches during this period was usually tiresome. At times the coaches were crowded with both passengers and mail and during the hot dry summers, as they lurched their way along the uneven roads, enveloped in dust, the passengers suffered many discomforts. Although the roads were rough and uneven, regular schedules were maintained and the journey was performed in remarkably good time. The stage routes operated in western Texas by B. F. Ficklin were run on the following schedules:

1. Between San Antonio and El Paso a service was maintained three times per week and the distance of 650 miles was covered in  $6\frac{1}{2}$  days.
2. Between Sherman, Texas, and Fort Smith, Arkansas, also a service three times per week was maintained, and the distance covered in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  days.
3. Between San Antonio and Eagle Pass there was also maintained a tri-weekly service and the distance of 150 miles covered in approximately 24 hours.

Concerning the line from Sherman to Fort

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*Richardson*, vol. 120, p. 74; and "A Report on Barracks and Hospitals, with Descriptions of Military Posts," in *Circular no. 4, War Department, S.G.O.*, Washington, May 5, 1870, pp. 197-198.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*

Smith, which ran along the line of frontier forts, one writer says: "Comfortable four-horse coaches have been placed upon the line from Fort Smith to Sherman. Although this line has been for some time established, it has heretofore run only two-horse hacks."<sup>304</sup>

Although many preferred to travel on the railway trains which were making their way into the Southwest by 1881, some still enjoyed a ride on a stage-coach. One of these, writing in 1878 says:

After one has been whirled through dust, cinders, and smoke, at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, for a thousand miles or more, it is a relief to change the rail-car for that dear old relic of the past – the stage-coach – with its four prancing horses, its ever-merry driver with tin horn ever ready to signal a station or a start. From the stage-coach one can see the country, enjoy the scenery along the route, and be sociable without splitting one's throat in the endeavor to be heard above the din and rattle, as is the case in railroad traveling. While the stage-coach, like other institutions that were held in high esteem in the earlier history of this country, has been forced to fall back before the onward march of the inventive genius of the age, still there is a luxury in that medium of traveling that neither time nor improvements can efface. The above thoughts were suggested while making a trip from San Antonio, Texas, to Fredericksburg, on the popular and well managed FOUR HORSE MAIL COACH LINE OF C. BAIN AND CO.'S.<sup>305</sup>

Although these comforts spoken of offered an appeal to some, to others this kind of travel could not keep abreast of the times. Delays and dangers

<sup>304</sup> *The Texas Almanac for 1871*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>305</sup> James L. Rock and W. I. Smith, *Southern and Western Texas Guide for 1878*, p. 240.

frequently offset such pleasurable travel. The stage-coach served its time well, but its many disadvantages soon turned the attention of the settlers toward a new method of travel to solve their problems: railway lines were slowly but surely being projected across the Southwest.

When the first settlements were planted on the frontier, there were not many ways of getting news from the outside world; but as soon as the towns in the sparsely settled area grew to any considerable size, newspapers partially filled the needs of the people. Pioneers and settlers eagerly awaited the publication of each issue of these papers and read with a great deal of interest every page, including the various kinds of advertisements found therein. To them the printing of news in this manner was wonderful indeed. On an occasion of the printing of such a newspaper in Denton, Texas, in May, 1868, an interesting scene is given to us by one who was present:

A Washington hand press was used and a negro by the name of John Skaggs rolled and inked the forms of type. The office was located in the upper story of the new storehouse of R. J. Battle and Company, on the southwest corner of the square. The news had gone out that a newspaper was to be started on the first Saturday in May, 1868, and a large number of men, women, and children came to witness the "sight." The forms were placed on the press. The paper was to be all home print. One side of the paper had been printed a few days before. The people were staring and gaping for the news. They crowded so close around the press that the foreman had to stretch a rope around to keep the people back and give the pressman room to

work. The whole community was on tiptoe and women held their children on their shoulders to give them a better view of the press while in operation. They had never seen a printing press before, and some of them had come from points several miles away to witness the event.<sup>808</sup>

The *San Antonio Daily Express*, *Austin Daily Republican*, *The Jacksboro Echo*, *The Fort Griffin Echo*, *Albany News*, etc., were other newspapers during the frontier period which helped to supply the settlers' needs in respect to news. At times the editors of these publications were roughly handled by the lawless classes for printing "the unvarnished truth." Such an instance is that recorded in the *Jacksboro Echo* of August 17, 1877, when the editor says: "We learn that a superannuated old dotard started out a few days ago with the avowed intention of giving the editor a good licking." It is well to say, too, that at times these articles were so personal as to justify the maligned citizen in seeking satisfaction.

In addition to the difficulty of getting news on the frontier by reason of poor roads, it was also true that much needed supplies never reached the settlements along the frontier for the same reason. Freight-wagons, pulled by oxen, mules and horses, would travel dim roads and trails at times in tens

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<sup>808</sup> The *Frontier Times*, Bandera, Texas, April, 1927, pp. 37-38. This frontier magazine is published by J. Marvin Hunter, editor of the *Trail Drivers*, an official publication of the Trail Drivers Association of Texas. Since it is filled with accounts of pioneering, written by both pioneers and others of our own generation, it is of considerable worth in bringing to light the history of the Southwest.

and twelves for mutual protection, and even then, at times, were held up by highwaymen. One of the Texas newspapers of 1868, carried an account of the Bickerstaff gang of robbers holding up one of the caravans and taking from it much of the goods being hauled.<sup>307</sup>

Acts of lawlessness such as these were of frequent occurrence upon the Southwestern border. Some of the frontier towns in the Southwest rivaled in notoriety, such towns as Dodge City, and Abilene, Kansas. Probably the most noticeable of these was Fort Griffin, or "The Flat," near that place. Here, just under the hill upon which the fort was located and near the banks of the Clear Fork of the Brazos, nestled the adobe huts and small frame shacks of the town. A more desperate and lawless class of people never collected at a western town than was to be found in this frontier village. The post surgeon at Fort Griffin in May, 1872, said that a short distance from the post was a camp of Tonkaways and a settlement of "Squatters." Prominent among them was a saloon-keeper called "Tol Bowers," a noted desperado, who killed a citizen named Cockerall without being tried by the military authorities. He further stated that the Tonkaways in their drunken brawls kept the settlement in constant terror. So turbulent were the lawless characters in this notorious settlement

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<sup>307</sup> *Austin Daily Republican*, August 25, 1868. Still another account of such an instance is given in Sam Houston Dixon's *Romance and Tragedy of Texas History*, 317-318.



that robbery was frequently perpetrated in open daylight, and at night "the Flat" was an inferno of ribaldry, lewd women, drunken gamblers, and designing thieves. It was a common sight to see both men and women in a "state of beastly intoxication."<sup>308</sup>

Undoubtedly one of the strangest characters who came to Fort Griffin during this period was a woman, going under the assumed name of "Lottie Deno." She first put in an appearance at Fort Concho about 1870 and soon was known as one of the most successful gamblers at this frontier post. She became known as "Mystic Maude" because she never told any one of her past life, nor would she associate with any one save in a business way. After the hours spent at the gambling table, where she never drank liquor or joined in the village gossip, she was accustomed to retire to an apartment which she kept in an adobe building near the Concho River. As mysteriously as she came she disappeared one day, going to Fort Griffin via the Overland Stage. Here she rented a small hut on the outskirts of the village and continued her gambling activities. She met famous gamblers here and more than held her own at the game of cards with all of them. Such characters as "Monte Bill," "Smoky Joe," and others of similar reputation, recognized her as an expert gambler. In a brawl in one of the saloons, two of the "bad men" fought a duel in

<sup>308</sup> For statement of the post surgeon see *Medical History of Fort Griffin*, vol. 51, p. 266.



which both were killed. When the sheriff arrived he found the building vacated by all but the two dying gamblers and the sphinx-like woman, "Lottie Deno."<sup>809</sup> Shortly after this incident this unusual character departed, and when after a few days she was still not to be found at her usual stand, the sheriff and a number of others curious to know the fate of the woman, broke into her hut. To the amazement of all present, the hut was handsomely furnished in all its appointments, and pinned to the bedspread was a bit of paper upon which were written these words: "Sell this outfit and give the money to some one in need of assistance."<sup>810</sup> Another account of this interesting woman is given by a rancher who lived above the fort during this period. He says:

Fort Griffin was the rendezvous for all this country. It was a veritable robber's hole. They would throw a blanket over your head and take your money in a flash. Many reckless and interesting characters came this way. One I recall was well known, a woman called Lottie Deno. She was a good looking, red headed woman, and came to the fort unannounced. She rented a cottage in the settlement and lived there alone. She was the central figure in every card game of the community and often staked large sums. She was known generally as being "straight," at least insofar as her relations with men were concerned. No one ever visited her house. One day she left on the stage as quietly and as mysteriously as she had come. No one

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<sup>809</sup> *The Frontier Times*, January, 1927, p. 2. Colonel John C. Jacobs writes in the February issue of this same magazine, p. 56, and states that he was sheriff at Fort Griffin during the time that "Lottie Deno" was there, and that he knew the gamblers referred to.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*

ever knew who she was, whence she came, or whither she went.<sup>311</sup>

Jacob Howarth, who was stationed at Fort Griffin during this period as Sergeant of the 11th Infantry was a witness to much of this lawlessness. In giving an account of his experiences he stated that one morning when he went down to the river to bathe, he found the body of a man hanging by the neck from a tree. Upon the back of the body was a placard bearing these words: "Horse thief, No. 8." This was the work of the Vigilance Committee, an organization which was secretly pledged to keep down lawlessness. Concerning its work, Howarth said: "At this time there was a Vigilance Committee (masked) used to patrol the town after horse thieves and before the county was organized and the County town of Albany formed in 1874, we had two horse thieves in the guard room, and when the court was established at Albany the Sheriff fetched them to be tried, but they were not tried as the Vigilance Committee broke into the Court House at night and hung them outside."<sup>312</sup> It was the work of this Vigilance Committee, in addition to the influx of a greater per cent of substantial frontiersmen, which brought about the enforcement of law and order at Fort Griffin.

Other frontier towns in the Southwest during

<sup>311</sup> "Frontier Experiences of Emmett Roberts of Nugent, Texas," in *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, 1927, p. 52; Edgar Rye's *Quirt and the Spur* also carries a readable account of this well known character.

<sup>312</sup> Jacob Howarth to R. C. Crane, March 29, 1926.

this time known for their rough characters were Fort Concho, now the thriving little city of San Angelo, Texas; Fort Reynolds, a buffalo trading station about fourteen miles north of the present town of Hamlin, Texas; Mobeetie, in the Panhandle of Texas; Fort Sill, Indian Territory; El Paso, Texas, where gamblers and desperadoes from Mexico mingled with those of Texas and New Mexico; and Santa Fé, New Mexico. The congregation of these desperadoes created such a state of terrorism along the entire border that even the real estate agencies, writing about the glories and opportunities in the great Southwest, were forced to pause in their lurid accounts as found in immigrant guide books, and comment on this situation. The following statement is an instance of this character: "A grave charge and one that it would be folly to deny, is the rampant lawlessness that exists in the sparsely settled border counties. Bands of criminals and desperadoes defy the law, commit murder with impunity, drive off cattle belonging to the citizens, and produce a general feeling of terror in the country."<sup>318</sup>

Because of these chaotic conditions on the frontier, the administration of justice by the courts of the land was difficult indeed. Not only was it hard to bring the offenders before the bar of justice, but it was likewise hard to secure a jury competent to pass on the various kinds of cases tried before the

<sup>318</sup> James L. Rock and W. I. Smith, *Southern and Western Texas Guide for 1878*, p. 24.

frontier judges. One of those who was a young attorney in this region during this period stated that "the presiding judges over these courts were often forced to place a very liberal interpretation on the qualifications of jurors in order that a venire might be obtained. Many judges held that a sheep herder, though living in a tent, was a qualified voter, and subject to jury service."<sup>314</sup> At a number of these trials the attorneys, the judges, and even the jurors were well armed. Probably the most noted of all the frontier judges of the Southwest, because of his liberal interpretation of the law, was Judge Roy Bean of Langtry, east of El Paso. In his small saloon and supply post, across the front of which was written, "Law West of the Pecos," this unique character administered the law. Although his decisions were at times laughable, in the majority of instances they were just.<sup>315</sup>

The houses built by the early settlers in the Southwest were usually constructed of logs, "adobe," or lumber. Those found along the Texas frontier seldom ever consisted of more than one or two rooms, built of logs, or clap-boards, with chimneys made of stone, or mud and poles. The

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<sup>314</sup> Address on "Law and Order in West Texas during the early days," given by Judge Fred Cockrell, before the West Texas Historical Association, meeting in Abilene, Texas, April 21, 1926. The quoted extract is found in the *Year Book* for June, 1926, p. 95. The father of Judge Cockrell was one of the most notable judges in the entire Southwest during this early period.

<sup>315</sup> Several newspapers in the Southwest in recent years have given considerable space to this interesting character. A good article of this kind is found in *Frontier Times*, September, 1927, p. 45.

interior was very simple. About the fireplace were found the cooking utensils, generally consisting of the baking-oven, skillet, a pot, tongs, a fire-rake, etc.<sup>316</sup> Conveniently near the fire place was located a clumsily built table, on each side of which were benches where the family sat while eating. On the table, which was usually covered with an oilcloth, were frequently placed some of the dishes, while others were stacked on a shelf attached to the wall of the house. At times in this same room, and especially when it was a house of but one room, were placed one or more beds. The furniture as a rule was very plain, but some of the families had chairs, tables, etc., imported from the east.

In the plains region farther west the settlers were not so fortunate. Here they lived in adobe huts or dugouts and the interior furnishings and decorations were of the simplest kind. A typical home of this character is described by General W. T. Sherman in the following language:

I would also like to make recognition of the hundreds of acts of most graceful hospitality on the part the officers and families at our remote military posts in the days of the "adobe," the "jacal," and "dug-out," when a board floor and a shingle roof were luxuries expected by none except the commanding officer. I can see, in memory, a beautiful young city-bred lady, who had married a poor Second-lieutenant, and followed him to his post on the plains whose quarters were in a "dug-out," ten feet by fifteen, seven feet high, with a dirt roof; four feet of the walls were the natural earth, the other three of sod, with holes for

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<sup>316</sup> For reference to furnishings of home see Colonel Acie Cooner's "Texas After the Civil War," in *Frontier Times*, April, 1927, p. 38.



windows and corn sacks for curtains. This little lady had her Saratoga trunk, which was the chief article of furniture; yet, by means of a rug on the ground floor, a few candle boxes covered with red cotton calico for seats, a table improvised out of a barrel head, and a fire-place and chimney excavated in the back wall or bank, she had transformed her "hole in the ground" into a most attractive home. . . .<sup>317</sup>

Although the equipment of many frontier homes was better than that described by General Sherman, unquestionably the lack of needful furnishings was a handicap to the frontier women in carrying out the duties of the home.<sup>318</sup>

The duties of the women of the homes of the Southwest were arduous indeed. Keeping tidy a crowded home such as she reigned over was no small task, but in addition thereto she was always busy preparing the food about the fireplace, doing the family washing once a week, making soap from ashes, lye, and odd pieces of meat, supplying her own needs of starch from potatoes,<sup>319</sup> moulding bullets from bars of lead bought at the hardware store, making quilts, and often cutting the wood and carrying the water for home consumption. In

<sup>317</sup> *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, II, 456-457.

<sup>318</sup> For variation in types of frontier homes in the Southwest, 1865-'81, it is interesting to take a description of a ranch house as given in *Gone to Texas*, 162-163, account written in March, 1882; and one describing home in timbered area, Montague County, Texas, as found in Mrs. W. R. Potter, *History of Montague County*, 118. The average home of the ranchman was that of the tent, "adobe," or "dug-out" type, while that of the "squatter," or farmer, was generally a frame-built home, or one made of logs.

<sup>319</sup> An interesting account of these duties of the home is found in Mrs. W. R. Potter, *History of Montague County*, 123.



the western part of the Southwest it was very seldom that the wife had anything but a dirt floor to stand upon.<sup>320</sup>

Although the duties of home life were very taxing on the physical strength of the women, there were many kinds of diversions; all was not drudgery and no play.<sup>321</sup> Quilting parties, dances, candy-breakings, play-parties, weddings, picnics, singings, and tournaments were some of the many kinds of social gatherings where the frontier people relieved the tedium of routine domestic life. In addition to these, the men often engaged in turkey and deer hunts, horse-racing, bronco-riding, "tournament practice," and competition in rifle shooting. To attend a dance, wedding, picnic, or a church service, the early settlers frequently rode forty or fifty miles.<sup>322</sup> These social occasions were great events in the lives of the frontier people which were in other respects monotonous enough.

It is sometimes believed by those who have not had the opportunity of investigation that the early

<sup>320</sup> W. W. Mills, *Forty Years at El Paso*, 105.

<sup>321</sup> The mother of the home would invite other ladies of the community to a quilting party which had for its purpose the making of a quilt. This was done by suspending from the ceiling by ropes or strings four poles, tied in the form of a rectangle the size of the desired quilt. Upon these poles would be sewed the cloth to become the under side of the quilt; then a layer of cotton over the cloth; and finally a second piece of cloth the size of the desired quilt, would be sewed, or "quilted" over the other two.

<sup>322</sup> T. P. Scott, *Experiences at Phantom Hill*, MS., in Carne Collection, Simmons University Library, Abilene, Texas. For these kinds of entertainments see also J. Marvin Hunter's *Trail Drivers of Texas*, 838, 878, and 988-995; and Mrs. W. R. Potter, *op. cit.*, 127.

settlers cared little for church or religious activities, but such was not true. Although it was often the case that the settlers had few opportunities to enjoy religious services, when such occasions came their way much interest was manifested in them. A writer living in the Hubbard settlement on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River during 1865 and 1866 wrote in his diary the following: "August 26.—There will be no preaching here tomorrow, as the people had expected. There are several persons here, grown, married and raising children, who have never heard a sermon." This same writer, however, later describes the arrival of the preacher, even though the country was filled with Indians, and the revival which followed.

The heroism of these frontier ministers of the gospel cannot be questioned. One of the early settlers in Texas, who yet lives, tells of the pluck of one of these when he says: "We came to a little church out in the woods where they were holding services. When we rode up Parson Edwards came out to learn what we wanted. He turned to his congregation and said, 'Friends, I sure hate to disappoint you, but these Indians have got to be followed, so we will just put off this meetin' till some other time!'" <sup>823</sup>

In the field of education many interesting experiences are recorded. As might be supposed, the

<sup>823</sup> The *San Antonio Light*, May 25, 1924. For another instance of "a fighting parson" see J. Marvin Hunter's *Trail Drivers of Texas*, 278.

lack of school advantages, by reason of the disorganized conditions existing on the frontier following the Civil War, constituted another problem of gigantic proportions. As late as 1872 a federal officer stationed at Fort Concho said: "There is no school at present maintained at the post, but the commanding officer, General Hatch, has given the post-quartermaster orders to estimate for material to build a post school house under the recent order from the War Department, and it is hoped that very soon a school will be started and the usual enlightenment be instilled into the minds of the young."<sup>324</sup> There were a few schools maintained, however, although the cultural value of them scarcely deserves the classification of educational advantages. Referring to the kind of students in many schools, one of the frontier teachers said: "March 13.—Commenced school here today for a term of fourteen weeks. I have only nineteen scholars at present and most of them are rude, wild and wholly unacquainted with school discipline."<sup>325</sup>

The early school houses were rather crude in structure. Some were made of logs, and some of adobe, or "Jacal." One of these typical of the timbered area was described by a pioneer woman as follows:

<sup>324</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, vol. 205, p. 298.

<sup>325</sup> Taken from the diary of Sam Newcomb who taught a school at the Hubbard settlement, Shackelford County, Texas, from 1865 to 1866. Printed in Don Bigger's *Shackelford County Sketches*.

They built a little log schoolhouse, and split logs for seats, and called it Happy Hollow School House. They got Parson Davis to promise to teach us a ten month's school. Oh, I was so glad. My father told me to go every day, and I wanted an education so bad. The teacher's family got sick – (it only lasted ten days) – and stayed sick so long and one of his children died and that broke up the school, and that ended my school days.<sup>326</sup>

There was no prescribed course of study in these early days. "Ray's Arithmetic," "McGuffey's Reader," the "Blue-back Spelling Book," and a dictionary generally made up the list of books studied. Committing to memory two or three pages of the dictionary or the spelling book was at times considered a noticeable accomplishment.

With the passing of reconstruction days these conditions rapidly gave way to more orderly procedure in educational matters. The large area of school land in Texas was a stimulus to pronounced advancement. In 1881 there were 4523 schools maintained in 159 counties with an enrollment of 133,667 students. As might be supposed, but few of these schools were in west Texas, but many of the western counties were taking a lively interest in education.<sup>327</sup>

The rapid introduction of a thorough-going

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<sup>326</sup> Autobiography of Mrs. Malissa C. Everett, MS., in the Crane Collection, Simmons University Library, Abilene, Texas. This school was in Cook County, Texas.

<sup>327</sup> For interesting statistics on this period see *Texas: Her Resources and Capabilities*, 1881, pp. 151-152, printed by the Southwestern Immigration Company (N. Y.). Texas at this time had 6,000,000 acres more of school land than was embraced in the whole area of the New England States.

school system was hindered to a large degree by the necessity of the farmers and ranchers to conquer their own environment. To clear away the tillable soil, to kill out the venomous rattlesnakes and predatory animals found thereon, and to carry on a slow process of experimentation in raising crops and developing a better type of cattle were pressing problems which had to be solved. These, with many other problems, engrossed the attention of the early settlers throughout the last part of the nineteenth century.

The lawlessness existing on the frontier, as previously referred to, was incident to the passing of the frontier. When the tide of immigration once turned toward the plains area, it was noticeable that the people were of Anglo-Saxon ancestry. A bold, progressive race of people attacked these problems with all the aggressiveness characteristic of this race and soon brought about a better era.





Influence of the Cattle Industry on  
the Frontier



## Influence of the Cattle Industry on the Frontier

Following the energetic campaign against the Apache of New Mexico, very little trouble with any hostile bands was met with after 1881. Substantiating this, General Augur,<sup>328</sup> commanding the Department of Texas, in his annual report of this year, called attention to the fact that very little activity on the part of predatory Indians had been noticed.<sup>329</sup> He stated that an agreement between General Ord and the commander of the Mexican forces had provided for a coöperative plan whereby the Rio Grande frontier would be protected.<sup>330</sup> In the Indian Territory during this period of time the agents of the various Indian reserves spoke with enthusiasm of the progress being made by their charges in the arts of civilization.<sup>331</sup>

The last band of depredating Indians appearing in Texas was on April 14, 1881, when a small

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<sup>328</sup> On January 3, 1881, General C. C. Augur succeeded General E. O. C. Ord to the command of the Department of Texas; see MS., file no. 5984, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>329</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, Department of Texas, 1881*, MS., A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> The reports of these agents are found in the *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* during period referred to.

party of Lipans, coming over from Mexico, killed a Mrs. McLauren, living on the Frio River, and robbed her house. As soon as the news was brought to the attention of the military authorities of Fort Clark, Lieutenant Bullis, with a small detachment of troops and Seminole Indian scouts, was sent out in pursuit. The trail was found and followed until the night of the sixth day when the pursuers found the camp of the marauders. On the following morning they attacked the sleeping Indians, killing four and capturing a squaw and child. The squaw told the soldiers that about sixty families of Lipans had their homes in Mexico adjacent to the Rio Grande between the mouth of the Pecos and San Carlos. She said that from numerous points on that line they crossed the Rio Grande and in small parties stole horses and cattle from the American side, making their escape by recrossing the river.<sup>332</sup>

Evidently the severe treatment administered by Lieutenant Bullis to this band taught the Lipans a much needed lesson for very few raids were reported after this date. Small bodies of Indians made their appearance about Piña Colorado and Fort Davis after this incident occurred, but when the troops appeared they precipitately fled across the Rio Grande. In the following year there were about twelve expeditions made from the Texas posts. These covered a total of 3662 miles but no

<sup>332</sup> *Annual Report of General Augur, Department of Texas, 1881, MS., A.G.O., War Department, Washington.*

signs of Indians were found. Of the six murders reported by the department commander, as occurring during the year, not one was laid to the charge of depredating Indians.<sup>888</sup>

With the decreased Indian depredations throughout the west, the advance line of frontier settlements moved on with ever increasing acceleration. The cattlemen were the first of the white pioneers to take advantage of the new situation. The history of the cattle industry east of the Staked Plains before 1875 was largely interwoven with that of the military establishments found there. The forces stationed at the several frontier forts were almost constantly engaged, one way or another, in defending the cattle interests against white thieves and Indian marauders. The disappearance of the frontier resulted from the occupation of the country by the cattlemen, and the building of railways across the western part of the state; hence the development of these two factors reveals the transition from the old period to the new.

Even before the end of Indian depredations, however, many cattlemen had made their way to the frontier and there established ranches. On May 17, 1871, while passing through the Fort Griffin country, Inspector-general Marcy of the United States Army said that he had passed through immense herds of cattle which were allowed to run wild upon the prairies and that in this state they multiplied rapidly. He stated that

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<sup>888</sup> *Ibid.*, 1882.

the only attention given to them by their owners was occasionally to go out and to inspect the range and to brand the calves. Concerning the hardships of the stock-raisers, he said: "The remains of several ranches were observed today, the occupants of which have been either killed or driven to the more dense settlements by the Indians. Indeed this rich and beautiful section does not contain today so many white people as it did when I visited it eighteen years ago, . . ." <sup>334</sup>

Often, when the Indians raided the ranches and drove off large herds of cattle, the ranchers in their despair would appeal to the post commanders for aid in recovering such stock. Wherever it was possible, the soldiers were sent in answer to these appeals but seldom did they succeed in recovering the stolen cattle. As a type of the procedure in such cases, the following order reveals the usual efforts put forth by the military authorities:

A rumor having reached this post that a party of cattle herders were attacked by Indians on the 2nd instant, at a place about twelve miles below Fort Griffin, Texas, on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, and one of their number killed, Second-Lieutenant D. B. Taylor, 11th United States Infantry, with a detachment of one non-commissioned officer and six privates, Cavalry, fully armed and equipped, mounted and furnished with forty rounds of ammunition per man, and eleven days rations, will proceed at once to the point indicated to investigate the case. Lieutenant

<sup>334</sup> "Extracts from Inspector-general Marcy's Journal on inspection tour while accompanying the General in Chief (Sherman) during the months of April, May, June, 1871," MS., in *Semi-Official Letters of W. T. Sherman, 1866-1871*, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington.



Taylor will learn, if possible, the name of person killed, and all the circumstances connected with the attack.<sup>335</sup>

As an instance of the character of aid rendered by the military authorities of the state to the cattlemen against white thieves, the following general order from the headquarters of the Fifth Military District of Austin, Texas, is quoted:

Information received from all parts of the State shows that cattle stealing prevails to an unprecedented extent, and that in many instances the persons in charge of droves refuse to permit them to be inspected. It is therefore ordered that post commanders furnish military aid to effect inspection of drove cattle on request of responsible parties interested. That no injustice may be done to the owner when no cattle are found in them in violation of law, the party desiring inspection shall indemnify the drover for all delay occurring thereby. The amount to be paid, where the parties concerned cannot agree, will be determined by the post commander, or if he cannot conveniently act, in such manner as he may direct. . . .<sup>336</sup>

Escorts for cattle were frequently furnished upon request. Such is an instance as found in the *Medical History of Fort Richardson* for the year 1870. It reads as follows: "In accordance with instruction from Headquarters, Department of Texas, two companies which left the post June 1st are still absent on that duty."<sup>337</sup> Concerning the routes of travel for such drovers, General Reynolds in

<sup>335</sup> "Special Order no. 118, Fort Griffin, July 8, 1872," taken from *Special Order Book of Post*, in vol. 205, p. 269, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>336</sup> *Flake's Daily Bulletin*, Friday, July 23, 1869.

<sup>337</sup> *Medical History of Fort Richardson*, vol. 120, p. 75, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

1870 proposed, with the sanction of the War Department, to concentrate enough of the Sixth Cavalry at Fort Richardson to furnish the following escorts as a protection to the cattle traders: one company to leave the mouth of the little Wichita, or its vicinity, as might be thereafter designated, on June 1, with sixty days' supply, to move on the cattle route three hundred miles and return to Fort Richardson; a similar force to leave the same point on June 15, July 1, and July 15, which would include the driving season that year.<sup>338</sup> As a justification for the protection thus given to the cattle interests, we find him saying at a later time:

The cattle interest of Texas is one of great magnitude, only requiring facilities for access to market to add enormously to the money value of that interest; immense numbers of cattle have been slaughtered for their hides. The permission granted under date of February 9, 1870, to furnish military escorts to cattle drivers northward from Fort Richardson, has been used to the great benefit of traders in that direction. Disturbances from the Indians were entirely averted during the last summer's trade, and that route may be considered as established and safe with an occasional escort.<sup>339</sup>

In order to prevent cattle drivers from including stolen animals in their herds crossing the Red River, a clever scheme was imposed on them by the regulations of the Cattle Raisers Association

<sup>338</sup> Fort Richardson, *Letters Received*, Oct. 9, 1869-April 23, 1870, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>339</sup> *Annual Report* of General Reynolds, commanding Department of Texas, MS., file no. 1140, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

of Texas. Each driver was required by law to keep a record of the number, brand, name of vendor, and date of purchase of all cattle he drove – the whole signed and acknowledged by the vendor. When the driver arrived at the river, he was required to exhibit his purchase list to an agent stationed there by the association, who verified it by count and examination of the herd. He then noted his findings upon his tally register in order to present an accurate record to those claiming irregularities in cattle driving, thus maintaining an effectual check on dishonesty in the trade.<sup>340</sup>

In addition to the protection given the cattle trade from forts Richardson and Griffin vicinities to the north, the post commander of Fort Concho did all in his power to protect the herds driven over the western trails to New Mexico and Colorado. Because of the loss on the part of the stockmen, great herds of cattle were gathered about the post awaiting a favorable opportunity to drive them to market. Many times these herds were attacked by the Indians and scattered or driven off. On an occasion such as this a band of Comanche attacked a herd near Johnson's Crossing, about eighteen miles from Fort Concho, secured one-half of the horses and cattle, and compelled the herders to return to the fort for new mounts. After waiting

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<sup>340</sup> "Extracts from Inspector-general Marcy's Journal on inspection tour while accompanying the General in Chief (Sherman) during the months of April, May, June, 1871," MS., found in *Semi-Official Letters*, W. T. Sherman, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington.

two or three days for a punitive expedition to come their way – which did not materialize – the same band of marauders returned and drove off the remainder of the cattle, thus making unnecessary the procurement of additional horses by the drivers. At the time of the incident, Major Rendelbroke with Company G of the 4th Cavalry was escorting a large number of herds beyond the Pecos, and though the garrison was materially reduced, Colonel Hatch ordered companies D and I of the same regiment, under the command of Captain McLaughlin, to intercept and punish the Indians who dared to come so near the post on one of these raids. The Indians succeeded in eluding their unwiry foes and the troops were forced to return to the post empty handed.<sup>341</sup> Shortly after this incident two additional herds were stampeded by the savages in the vicinity of the post and one cowboy was killed.<sup>342</sup>

During the time of trouble with the hostile Indians living north of the Red River the cattlemen created much embarrassment for the federal authorities by driving their cattle to market through the reservations, thus making it easy for the savages to give trouble to the ranchers. On June 15, 1870,

<sup>341</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, in vol. 205, p. 269, of Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>342</sup> About the same time, and probably by the same band, the stage was attacked at Johnson's Station, a short distance from the post, but the driver escaped by jumping from his coach, after he was wounded, into some "prickly-pear" clumps. His mules were taken and his mail destroyed.

Laurie Tatum, agent of the Kiowa-Comanche reservation, wrote a letter of protest to Brevet Major-general Grierson, commanding at Fort Sill concerning the driving of cattle through his reservation, saying that this would undoubtedly lead to trouble with the Indians.<sup>343</sup> He gave it as his opinion that those guilty of this practice knew that it was against the orders of government officers stationed in that region, citing the following order which had appeared in the *Weatherford Times*:

ORDER NO. 1—Except for the use of the Agency and troops of Fort Sill, driving of cattle onto or otherwise trespassing on the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache reservation is positively prohibited on account of the liability of causing difficulties with the Indians. The eastern boundary of the reservation is the 98th meridian.

After having received Tatum's protest, the General wrote to Brevet Brigadier-general James Oakes,<sup>344</sup> commanding at Fort Richardson, transmitting a copy of the letter of Agent Tatum, stating that his orders were such that he was to use force if necessary to forbid such trespassing, and further declaring that such parties were liable to arrest and to have their property confiscated. He therefore requested that upon receipt of his letter the commander of Fort Richardson should change the route of the cattle drivers from the one used to one

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<sup>343</sup> Tatum to Grierson, June 15, 1870, file no. 1075-M, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.

<sup>344</sup> Grierson to Oakes, June 18, 1870, file no. 1075-M, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



through the Chickasaw Nation, where escort was unnecessary. The general also said that Major Tupper of General Oakes's regiment had escorted a drove of a Mr. Hunter via Fort Sill and that the owner of the cattle had made him a promise that he would thereafter drive his cattle farther east, but that in a subsequent drive he had failed to comply with this promise.

In reply to this letter General Oakes wrote that he had come into possession of the agent's order too late to prevent him from sending out Captain Irvin and his company as escort of a drove, but that thenceforth no guard would be furnished through the nation of the hostile Indians, thus forcing the cattlemen to drive through the country farther east.<sup>345</sup>

When the hostile Indians were forced to cease their depredations on the people living in Texas, many immigrants, eager to take advantage of the lucrative opportunities for stock raising in this region, poured into the new country. No one rejoiced in this movement more than did General W. T. Sherman who had the responsibility of looking after the wild savages of the West. In commenting on this situation before a congressional committee he said that the settlements were increasing in number and value, and that the settlers coming in were anxious to enter on the great venture of cattle raising. This, he said, was more rea-

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<sup>345</sup> Oakes to Grierson, July 7, 1870, file no. 1075-M, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



son why the country should be adequately defended; that it was to the interests of the government thus to encourage the settlement of the country by a hardy, bold people, who would engage in stock raising, and "if we can give them increased security, probably the whole region of the country, which is a mesquite grass region, will be occupied by ranches, guarded by men who will fight for their own property and add to the wealth of the nation."<sup>346</sup>

In 1876, the Panhandle of Texas was first partially stocked. In November, 1877, Mr. Charles Goodnight entered the Panhandle, coming from Southern Colorado, and located a herd of 2200 cattle at the head of the Red River. Three years following this time, 225,857 head of cattle were located in this region, "in spite of losses due to spring storms and black wolves."<sup>347</sup> To the south of Mr. Goodnight's ranch, the Shad brothers located in Wichita County, and later Daniel Waggoner established his herd farther down the same stream.<sup>348</sup> Before the end of this decade other ranchmen hastened to the Panhandle and the cattle industry soon became well established there.

Numerous trails were used over which cattle were driven to market. One began at the Gulf coast of Texas, passed northward, west of San Antonio, thence on northward to the Red River at

<sup>346</sup> 45 Cong., 2 sess., *House Misc. Docs.*, no. 64, p. 28.

<sup>347</sup> Clara M. Love, "History of the Cattle Industry in the Southwest," in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, xix, 388.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

Doan's Store in Wilbarger County, Texas.<sup>349</sup> Here it divided into two trails. One leading northward into what is now Beaver County, Oklahoma, thence west to the Colorado ranges. The other trail led in a northeasterly direction through the Fort Sill reservation. It crossed the Washita River at Anadarko, Oklahoma, and thence, in a northeasterly course, crossing the Canadian River, on to Abilene, Kansas. The Chisholm Trail was another route followed from the southern part of Texas to the Red River in Cook County. The trail was named after John Chisholm who lived at Paris, Texas.<sup>350</sup> The Goodnight Trail, often called the Goodnight Loving Trail, started from Fort Concho, running west along the Concho River, thence crossed the Staked Plains and struck the Pecos at Horsehead Crossing. From here it followed the Pecos, entering New Mexico near Pope's Wells. There it divided, one trail leading west via El Paso and on to Arizona, and the other struck off at the mouth of the Penasco and proceeded west up that stream and across the divide to Tularosa, and thence in a southwesterly direction to Las Cruces.<sup>351</sup>

Texas, during this period, was the greatest cat-

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<sup>349</sup> Department of Agriculture *Yearbook*, 1908, p. 229.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, also J. M. Hunter and G. W. Sanders, *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, 951, for difference between Chisholm and Chisum.

<sup>351</sup> Department of Agriculture *Yearbook*, 1908, p. 229. The Census report of 1880 gives an itemization by counties of the cattle industry, and for a good discussion of ranch life, round-ups, drives, etc., one should consult J. G. McCoy's *Historic Sketches of Cattle Industry in the West and Southwest* published in 1874.



ON THE CHISHOLM TRAIL AT DOAN'S STORE



the growing state of the American Union. Figures as given in the Tenth United States census, 1880, estimates the amazingly large number of cattle driven over the northern trails from the Southwest. Of the drives from 1866 to 1881, the figures are as follows:

TO SADALIA, MISSOURI,

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Number of Cattle driven</i> |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 1866 -----  | 260,000                        |

TO ABILENE, KANSAS,

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1867 ----- | 35,000  |
| 1868 ----- | 75,000  |
| 1869 ----- | 350,000 |
| 1870 ----- | 300,000 |
| 1871 ----- | 700,000 |

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Total ----- 1,460,000

TO WICHITA AND ELLSWORTH, KANSAS,

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1872 ----- | 350,000 |
| 1873 ----- | 405,000 |
| 1874 ----- | 166,000 |
| 1875 ----- | 151,618 |

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Total ----- 1,072,618

TO DODGE CITY AND ELLIS, KANSAS,

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1876 ----- | 322,000 |
| 1877 ----- | 201,159 |
| 1878 ----- | 265,646 |

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|                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1879 -----                                      | 257,927   |
| Total -----                                     | 1,046,732 |
| TO DODGE CITY, CALDWELL AND HUNNEVILLE, KANSAS, |           |
| 1880 -----                                      | 384,147   |

The grand total of the drives to these cattle shipping points amounts to 4,223,497.<sup>352</sup> When it is remembered that thousands of cattle were driven over the Goodnight Loving Trail and Mackenzie Trail into New Mexico and Colorado, and many other drives were made to other points in Kansas not included in this table, these figures seem all the more remarkable.

The number of cattle in Texas in 1870 was estimated at about four to one of the population; whereas, in the three states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, the proportion was reversed. In this year, Texas was supposed to have 3,500,000 head, and at the same time she was branding on an average of about 750,000 calves annually.<sup>353</sup> The shipments of cattle on the Kansas Pacific Railroad for the four years ending with 1870, according to a statement by A. Anderson, general superinten-

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<sup>352</sup> The above given figures are taken from the *Tenth census of the United States*, 1880, III, *Statistics of Agriculture*, "Production of Meat," 21. It should be observed that there is a falling off in the numbers driven in the years 1867, 1868, 1874, and 1875. The Indian troubles of 1867-1868, and again in 1874-1875, explain this decrease in the numbers driven.

<sup>353</sup> *Report of the Department of Agriculture for 1870*, p. 346.



dent of the road, were as follows: 1867, 30,000 head; 1868, 57,000 head; 1869, 47,000 head; and 1870, 125,000 head. Of these shipments it was estimated that 97 to 98 per cent were Texas cattle. The aggregate shipments in 1870 of five railroads leading eastward from the cattle country were 232,000.<sup>354</sup>

So important became the cattle trade of the Texas plains that the Secretary of Agriculture, in his annual report of 1870, declared that it had so disturbed the markets as to derange, to some extent, the general market. He stated that if the conditions of the time were perpetuated that the states situated east of the Mississippi River would be compelled to yield entirely the production of lower grades of beef, a supremacy heretofore unchallenged by any section of the United States. So keen became the competition of the rival railways that the Union Pacific advertised Schuyler, twenty-five miles west of Omaha, as a good shipping point for Texas cattle to offset the growing importance of Abilene, Kansas, on the Kansas Pacific, and Baxter Springs, Kansas, on the Missouri River, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad. Not only did these points become important cattle towns, but, Hutchinson, Dodge City, Marshall and Ogallala were also important stations from which cattle were shipped to the markets at St. Louis and Chicago.<sup>355</sup>

When the cattle industry of the Southwest be-

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<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>355</sup> F. L. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, 536-538.

came a profitable business venture, the immigrant real estate companies advertised in glowing colors the wonderful possibilities of cattle raising in the Southwest. So successful were they that home seekers by the thousands came into the plains region. The population of Texas from 1870 to 1880 increased 720,965, while that of New Mexico rose from 86,524 to 111,514.<sup>356</sup> It was soon found, however, that great fortunes were not to be made in the cattle business unless considerable energy and business ability were exercised.

When the newly arrived immigrant undertook to engage in cattle raising it was first necessary for him to select a ranch where he would have access to water and grass, apportioning to each head of cattle about fifteen or twenty-five acres of grass land.<sup>357</sup> Then it was necessary for him to construct his ranch house, generally near the center of his tract of land, and in addition thereto corrals, out-houses, etc. An estimate of the expenditures necessary for the equipment of an ordinary sized ranch is given as follows: cabins, stable, and corrals, \$700.00; wagon, mules, and harness, \$350.00; twenty-five horses at \$30 each, \$750.00; five saddles, bridles, and equipment, \$150.00; sundries, such as ropes, ranch tools, etc., \$50.00; camp outfit, \$50.00; one thousand three-year old cows at \$9.50 each; and forty bulls at \$20.00 each. The total of these items amounted to \$12,350.00. In addition to this

<sup>356</sup> *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, I, Population, 439.*

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid., III, Statistics of Agriculture, "Production of Meat," 18.*

initial cost it was necessary to add as yearly expenses the following expenditures: monthly wages of two hands, \$25.00 each and \$10.00 board, or \$840.00; monthly wages of cook, \$20.00, and board \$10.00 or \$360.00; taxes on 1040 cattle \$125.50; sacks of salt at \$2.50 per sack, \$125.00; horseshoes, \$112.50. This made a total of \$1562.50 which added to the initial cost of \$12,350.00, made a grand total of \$13,912.50<sup>358</sup> necessary for buying and operating a ranch for the first year.

The duties of ranch life were many and varied. After the cattle were branded and marked, and brand and mark recorded in the county records, some care was necessary in keeping the cattle together on the free range. To this end about five horses were assigned to each cowboy,<sup>359</sup> upon which he frequently rode over the range to look after the stock. Even then, however, cattle would frequently stray from the portion of the grassy plains used by the ranchman and trespass on the range of another. Because of this situation, and especially because of the scattering of stock in the winter when the range was not ridden quite so frequently, it was necessary to hold a spring round-up.

The spring round-ups were rather interesting affairs in the lives of the cowmen. It was customary for the ranchers living contiguous to each other to

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<sup>358</sup> This average cost of establishing a ranch is given by census enumerator in *Tenth Census of the United States*, III, *Statistics of Agriculture*, "Production of Meat," 18. This estimate is based on cost of ranch of 30,000 acres.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

form one common body for the purpose of the round-up. Each rancher would furnish an "outfit" consisting of a "chuck wagon" drawn by mules or horses, and presided over by the cook, and five or more cowboys, each mounted on an active pony, and holding in reserve others. This consolidated "outfit" would then take a large area, usually between two parallel rivers or streams, and make several drives toward a designated spot. Here the collected cattle would be divided according to brand, the calves being branded in accordance with the brand of their mothers. If there were any unbranded cattle these would be divided among the "outfits" present. The segregated cattle would then be turned back to the ranch, or range to which they belonged. Thus, the round-ups would continue until the entire range had been covered. The ranchers were usually careful to see that cattle bearing the brand of another cowman in a different part of the country was returned to him.<sup>360</sup>

Although the round-ups were interesting affairs, the long drives from the grassy regions to the markets of both the North and West were more colorful. These drives were not engaged in by the owners of ranches alone, but frequently cattle buyers would come into the Southwest, buy up a herd

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.* For the experiences of a rancher who lived above Fort Griffin in 1874, see "Frontier Experiences of Emmett Roberts of Nugent, Texas," in *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, June, 1927. This rancher not only tells of the routine of ranch life, but also conditions existing on the free range at that time.

here and there, and drive it to market. It was generally true, however, that cattlemen would conduct their own drives. When he did not have a sufficient number of marketable cattle it was customary for him to borrow from his neighbor, paying him the market price upon his return from the northern market.<sup>361</sup> The size of herds driven northward or westward usually consisted of one thousand or more cattle.<sup>362</sup> The number of cowboys employed on one of these drives was ten to twelve for each herd of two thousand cattle. Riding at the head of the animals, on the right and left were the "pointers,"<sup>363</sup> and along the line of moving cattle rode the remainder of the herders. The "Chuck-wagon" usually brought up the rear.

As the herd moved along toward market, or the northern range, they were driven by easy stages, and upon the arrival at the banks of a stream or water hole where the grass was good, they would be bedded down for the evening. This was done by causing the cattle to mill about, the herders slowly

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* See also various experiences of trail drivers in J. Marvin Hunter's *The Trail Drivers of Texas*, and also Thomas C. Battey's *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians*, II, 13, 14, 17, 78, and 80.

<sup>362</sup> The cost of these drives depended on the size of the herds, *i.e.*, from Fort Worth, Texas, to Mermijo, New Mexico, a distance of about seven hundred miles, it cost \$1800 to \$2000 for a herd of 1000 animals; \$3000 for 2000; \$3500 for 3000; \$5000 for 5000; and a herd of 10,000 for about \$6000 or \$7000. These figures given by census enumerator in *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, III, *Statistics of Agriculture*, "Production of Meat," 36.

<sup>363</sup> The "pointers" directed the course of the herd by turning the leaders to the right or left, or keeping them moving straight ahead.



riding about them singing a soothing melody.<sup>364</sup> Guards were then mounted and relieved at regular intervals during the night. The watch of these guards was not always peaceful. At times the stampede of buffaloes, the crashing of thunder upon the approach of a storm, the pounding of hail upon the frightened animals, or the sudden arousing of a sleeping steer, would cause a stampede. During these fearful moments the lives of the cowmen were frequently in danger, and it was necessary for them to flee in advance of the herd. On such occasions it was difficult to round up the scattered herd, and sometimes many of the cattle were lost in this way.<sup>365</sup>

As a rule the cowboys making up the various "outfits" driving to market were honest and capable, but they were often rough and uncouth in their habits. A Quaker who came to the Indian Territory in 1872, describes the Texas cowboys as follows:

Evening, put up at a ranche kept by a man from Pennsylvania, who, though very genteel in his manners, and appearing disposed to accommodate travellers to the best of his ability, retails liquors by the dram, permits card-playing, gambling, &c.

<sup>364</sup> The doleful melodies of the range, sung by the cowboys as they kept watch over the sleeping herd, seemed to soothe the shaken nerves of the wild cattle, and assured by the voices of their watchful guards on these occasions they would sleep. In James H. Cook's *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*, 41 ff., we have an excellent account of an experience of this kind. His accounts of incidents along the trail are very interesting.

<sup>365</sup> Many times it was necessary for the drivers to defend the herd against the thieving attempts of the Indians and white desperadoes.



His ranche, like most others, is built of logs, and roofed with dirt, on which is quite a growth of grass and weeds. Two large herds of Texas cattle are being pastured here, and are enclosed in the corral near the ranch at night. The Texan herders were drinking and playing cards until late in the night, and as one small room serves for a kitchen, dining-room, sitting-room, bedroom, store, saloon, and corn-crib, there was not much space between my bed on the floor and the gambling-table where these degraded beings were keeping up their wild orgies, — swearing, drinking, smoking, and shuffling their cards.<sup>366</sup>

The first cattle driven to market were the "Long-horn" type, of every color, and some with patches of white. Their horns were enormously long and thin with a half-twist back. They were tall, gaunt, and narrow behind; and their legs were long and hoofs were large.<sup>367</sup> These cattle were not the same as the wild cattle spoken of during an earlier period, which were brown, with a light stripe down the back; long, slim, blue horns; large and mealy nose. Nor were they like the Mexican or so-called "Spanish" cattle, which were smaller than the "Long-horns," raw-boned, with shorter horns, and not so wild.<sup>368</sup>

At the close of the Civil War when the cattlemen made their appearance on the plains there were thousands of cattle, which were called "Mavericks," going about unbranded. There has been considerable discussion in various articles and books on the term "Maverick." Hon. Samuel A.

<sup>366</sup> Thomas C. Battey, *op. cit.*, 78.

<sup>367</sup> *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, III, *Statistics of Agriculture*, "Production of Meat," 36.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

Maverick, a citizen of San Antonio, during 1845 was temporarily residing at Decrows Point on Madagorda Bay. A neighbor was indebted to him to the amount of twelve hundred dollars and paid his debt in cattle, transferring to him four hundred head at three dollars per head. Since the cattle were worth very little at the time, they were put under the care of a colored family living in the neighborhood, while Maverick and his family returned to San Antonio. In 1853 the cattle were transferred to the Conquista ranch on the east bank of the San Antonio River, fifty miles below San Antonio. Here, still under the care of the colored family, they multiplied in numbers, but little care was manifested by their guardians with the result that in 1853 only about one-third of them were branded. Since the brand generally determined the ownership of animals in the courts of the land, enterprising ranchers living in the vicinity placed their own marks on the unbranded Maverick stock. The disappearance of the Maverick cattle soon became well known throughout the country; consequently in later years all cattle roving about, wild and unbranded, were called "Mavericks."<sup>369</sup>

The activity of those engaged in the cattle indus-

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<sup>369</sup> George M. Maverick to *St. Louis Republic*, Nov. 16, 1889, quoted in *Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick*, 123. Mr. Maverick later sold his cattle to A. Toutant Beauregard for six dollars per head, thus making 100 per cent on the original investment, since he sold the same number as was first turned over to him. Professor F. L. Paxson, in his *History of the American Frontier*, 537, in his otherwise excellent discussion of the cattle industry of the Southwest, is in error on the origin of this term.

try soon drew a steady stream of settlers toward the Southwest. So fast did civilization move westward that on December 18, 1879, General Sheridan called the attention of General Sherman to his recommendation for the establishment of a new post about midway between the Concho River and Fort Elliott, saying that the main object he had in view when the post of Fort Elliott was established was to open up a route for Texas cattle to the north, which would lie west of the settlements in the Indian Territory and in Kansas. Had this post been established, a line for cattle from Texas to the Arkansas River and the railways at Dodge City and the west of that point would have been provided. On this cattle route would have been the posts of Fort Dodge, Camp Supply, and Fort Elliott, and the new post (if authorized) between Fort Elliott and Fort Concho. The coming of railways to the Southwest, however, as is indicated in the following chapter, obviated the necessity of the new post.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Report of Adjutant-general to Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, file no. 2653, Old Records Division, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



## Building of Railways





## Building of Railways

One of the determining factors in the disappearance of the Southwestern frontier was the projection of railways across this vast domain. Where once had been the great monotonous stretches of prairies, valleys, and hills, there soon came to be thriving little stations and villages along the newly built railroads. The long cattle trails became less and less used with the advent of these bands of steel, and the home seekers, who settled about the small towns and villages, and fenced in large portions of what had previously been the free range. The railways began to be used as arteries of trade for the cattle industry. As early as 1875, when numerous herds of cattle were being driven over the northern trails there were 71,168 head shipped over the Texas and Pacific Railroad toward the east,<sup>371</sup> and in 1877 the tonnage of the live stock shipments was next to that of lumber, requiring one hundred and sixty-nine cars to move it.

The absence of streams deep enough for water transportation across the Southwest made it highly necessary to provide for overland transportation.

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<sup>371</sup> S. B. McAllister, *Building the Texas and Pacific Railroad*. Thesis prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters degree at the University of Texas, May 25, 1926. The Texas and Pacific reached a short distance east of Fort Worth at this time.

As early as 1853 the congress of the United States appropriated \$150,000 to be expended by the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, in directing surveys for the best possible routes for a Pacific Railroad. One of these surveys was made through the Southwest via Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. After it was made, however, sectional rivalries over the right to have the road became so bitter that finally, as a compromise plan, the Post-office Department put into operation an overland stage line to carry both mail and passengers. As has been previously stated, John Butterfield was awarded the contract, and on October 9, 1858, succeeded in sending through the first coach from San Francisco to Saint Louis. Although this was a spectacular achievement, it did not satisfy the demands for a line of communication and transportation between the East and the West; therefore when the Civil War came in 1861, the road was abandoned in favor of a more northerly one which did not pass through the territory of the Confederacy.<sup>372</sup>

For a time following the close of the Civil War sectional antipathies and reconstruction problems prevented the building of a southern line, but interest soon revived and on March 3, 1871, the Texas Pacific Railroad<sup>373</sup> was chartered with such men

<sup>372</sup> This stage road was used again both during and after the Civil War and became one of the well known highways along the frontier. Other stage companies took up the task of furnishing the outposts of civilization with mail and much needed supplies.

<sup>373</sup> For the attitude of the federal government toward the railway during the Civil War period see F. L. Paxson's *History of the Ameri-*

as John C. Fremont, G. M. Dodge, Marshall O. Roberts, and Thomas A. Scott as incorporators. The company was authorized to construct a railway and telegraph line from a point near Marshall, Texas, to El Paso, and thence through southern New Mexico and Arizona to California.<sup>374</sup>

There were several reorganizations of the southern road system before it was completed, and in order to show that it was to be a transcontinental line, and not one built within the bounds of the state, congress changed its name from Texas Pacific Railroad to the Texas and Pacific Railroad.<sup>375</sup> Since there were troubles in securing capital and supplies with which to build the road, it was slow in getting started; but in June, 1872, Colonel Thomas A. Scott took charge as its president, and the task of marking out the unsettled region across the western part of the state began. This required at times the assistance of federal troops to protect the surveying parties as is indicated in the following record of Fort Concho in 1873: "Garrison to the amount of one Company, 'H,' Fourth Cavalry, and 'I,' Eleventh Infantry, usually at the Post, with surveying expedition of Texas and Pacific Railroad."<sup>376</sup> In this connection, Grenville M. Dodge, who was the chief engineer,

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*can Frontier*, 469. The Union Pacific Railway, built through southern Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and into California engaged the attention of congress up to 1869.

<sup>374</sup> S. B. McAllister, *op. cit.*, 32.

<sup>375</sup> L. H. Haney, *Congressional History of Railways*, II, 125.

<sup>376</sup> *Medical History of Fort Concho*, vol. 206, p. 106.

issued the following instructions to his divisional engineers under him:

In building the Texas and Pacific we must have in view the commercial as well as the engineering qualities of the line. We want a road through Texas which the country, when settled, is susceptible of supporting by its local trade when built. The party will therefore note carefully the quality and capacity of the agricultural, grazing, and mineral resources of each township and county. . . . The party taking the field must be armed, and the chief must be a man of energy and one who will not run at the sight of an Indian.<sup>377</sup>

The western terminus of the road on the eastern division reached Eagle Ford early in 1874, and for a time there it stopped. The little town of Fort Worth, having at that time only 1600 inhabitants,<sup>378</sup> became so anxious to have the line built that far that there was organized the Tarrant County Construction Company, which undertook to hasten the coming of the road. However, there was little accomplished in this way. On July 19, 1876, the first train entered the town and was tumultuously received by the people.<sup>379</sup>

Although the Texas and Pacific Railroad was the most important line traversing the unsettled portion of the Southwest, it was by no means the only one. The building of the Southern Pacific,

<sup>377</sup> S. B. McAllister, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>378</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *North Mexican States and Texas*, II, 1801-1889, p. 575.

<sup>379</sup> S. B. McAllister, *op. cit.*, 52. Weatherford attempted to emulate the example of Fort Worth and organized the Parker County Construction Company, but it met with little success. The roadbed was not graded to this town until 1879.

which began construction in California soon after the Civil War, was a matter of considerable importance to the Southwest. Building through the southern part of Arizona and New Mexico it finally, by 1882, connected with the Texas and Pacific at Sierra Blanca, Texas, and later bought up other roads which when consolidated extended its line on across the southern part of Texas via San Antonio to New Orleans. However, even before these two roads had reached the Southwest, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas had been projected across the Indian Territory, and after 1872 had its southern terminus at Denison. From this point thousands of cattle were shipped to Hannibal, Missouri, and from there a shipper had a choice of competing routes to Chicago and Buffalo.<sup>380</sup> The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé, following the Santa Fé Trail from the Missouri River, was another road which came into the Southwest. Before the end of 1872 it had been completed across the state of Kansas and thereby earned its land grant. This was another line of approach to the Southwest which aided materially in its development. Still another line put under way during this period was the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fé, chartered to run from Galveston, Texas, up the Colorado River to Santa Fé, New Mexico. Although the road was given its charter in May, 1873, it was slow in building toward its objective, and by the

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<sup>380</sup> J. G. McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Industry in the West and Southwest*, 418.



end of this period it was being projected across the central part of the state.<sup>381</sup> There were several other smaller lines built during this period, all of which tended to aid in the transformation of the country through which they ran.

In west Texas the scouting parties of troops, driving the Indians before them, were closely followed, and often when danger was imminent, preceded by surveyors locating railroads. So intense was the rivalry among some of the competing companies that about half a dozen parties of surveyors entered into a race to see which would get its survey through the dangerous district of the Department of Texas first, and which would secure the best route for their road. General Ord stated that the troops should be kept constantly on the alert because of this reckless disregard for danger.<sup>382</sup> As to the effectiveness of railway building as a civilizer General Ord said: "Every railway is not only a rapid civilizer, but a sure protector to the frontier penetrated by it. . . . The sight of a locomotive, whistling along its train, is such a 'big medicine' for the savages, that they will wilt under its influence and instead of continuing to steal horses and other stock, they camp along the road, not too proud to get an occasional ride on the platform."<sup>383</sup> The Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, speaking about the same thing, said:

<sup>381</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, 573.

<sup>382</sup> *Annual Report* of General Ord, Commanding Department of Texas, Oct. 1, 1880, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*



"Indians cannot fight near a railway. Their paltry, flabby, grass-fed horses cannot keep ahead of American horses fed liberally with grain, and the latter point, upon which all Indian fighting at last turns, is secured by the proximity of a railway."<sup>384</sup>

In his annual report of 1881, General Augur made mention of the near completion, to and along the Rio Grande and the northern frontier, of several lines of railways, and stated that this would change very materially the conditions of the problems of protection and defense for this region. At this time the track of the Texas and Pacific road was laid as far as San Martin Springs, Texas, in the longitude of Fort Davis and about fifty miles north. The Southern Pacific was extending its track from El Paso via Carrizo Pass, Eagle Springs, Piña Colorado, Meyer's Spring, and the mouth of the Pecos.<sup>385</sup> The International and Great Northern was completed and running to Las Raices, beyond the Nueces, and was in fair way of being completed to Laredo.

The transformation of the Southwest from a frontier area to one of thriving communities and towns, following the building of railways, was one of the most astonishing developments of American history in the nineteenth century. Towns and villages sprang up along the railways as though by magic. Forth Worth grew from a town of 1600 in

<sup>384</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 80.*

<sup>385</sup> It should be remembered that this locality is the same over which the Victorio War was fought but two years previous to this time.

1873 to a city of 30,000 in 1888.<sup>386</sup> Concerning its development during this period a writer says:

The city of Fort Worth is comparatively new, and its astonishing growth since the completion of the Texas and Pacific Railway to that point, has excited wide attention. The large influx of immigration awakened a little prairie town to the importance of a city that has achieved the compliment of the "Queen City of the Plains." Its present population is about ten thousand and is daily increasing.<sup>387</sup>

Concerning the town of Denison, which was the terminus of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway for a short time, the following statement was made:

Eight years ago the place where Denison now is was an unimproved prairie, and was arbitrarily selected by a railroad engineer as the terminus of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway, which was then being constructed through the Indian Territory to that point. . . . It is properly named the "Gate City" of Texas, for through it thousands enter the state, and for the first time behold the expanding country that stretches away to the Gulf, and in the west to the rising mountains. . . . The construction of buildings commenced in September, 1872, and has continued until the city has a population of about 6000. . . . The industries of the city are as vigorous as its growth. Its cotton compress, cement works, ice manufacturing, gas works, flouring mills, elevator, saw and planing mills, brick works, and all other industries connected with an advancing city, give to it a commanding character and credit.<sup>388</sup>

Abilene, Texas, taking its name from Abilene, Kansas, the great cattle shipping town, was estab-

<sup>386</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, 525.

<sup>387</sup> J. L. Rock and W. S. Smith, *Southern and Western Texas Guide* for 1878, p. 147.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-147.

lished as a tent town of approximately 1500 inhabitants; and Sweetwater, Colorado, and Big Spring were other towns which sprang up along the Texas and Pacific from 1880 to 1882. As might be supposed, the population at these new towns was largely transient, although when the road moved on they continued to grow with the development of the country. Concerning the character of the people living in the last town named, an observer wrote:

The population of the town at present is composed largely of fast men and women, who live in tents and seemingly take life easy. It is almost exclusively of that class who flit along the road as it is completed, and many are already leaving and making preparations to move to the Pecos river. There is nothing there now to supply even a moderate sized town, as there are but few cattlemen in the vicinity, and in the County of Hopkins there has never yet been introduced a plow or hoe for the purpose of tilling the soil.<sup>389</sup>

Along with the lower classes of people, who followed the building of the various roads, there also came in an increasing number of substantial citizens, and as these increased in numbers, various kinds of municipal improvements were sponsored and carried forward until within a period of a few years many of these small towns and villages became thriving little cities.<sup>390</sup>

When once the building of railways was started in the Southwest, the growth was then rapid. By

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<sup>389</sup> *Dallas Herald*, June 8, 1881.

<sup>390</sup> As a town of this type, Abilene, Texas, has grown from a tent town of 1500 into a college town of 30,000 inhabitants.

June 30, 1880, there were 277.43 miles built across the Indian Territory; 2696.64 in Texas; and 298.57 constructed across New Mexico.<sup>391</sup> Along with this extension of railroads went a considerable gain in population and wealth. The number of immigrants coming to Texas swelled the population from 756,168 in 1870 to 1,477,133 in 1880; and in New Mexico the increase was from 86,524 in 1870 to 111,514 in 1880. The total land in farms in Texas in 1880 amounted to 36,292,219 acres, and on these and the grassy areas uncultivated, the live stock were valued at \$60,367,987. In New Mexico there were but 631,133 acres in farms with \$5,010,800 invested in live stock. It is seen from these figures that New Mexico<sup>392</sup> was not developing in civilization as rapidly as was Texas during this period, but the hostility of the Apache Indians had a retarding influence on this part of the Southwest.

As a result of these civilizing tendencies the military posts were abandoned, one by one. General Augur stated in his report of 1881 that forts Concho, McKavett, and Stockton were rendered unnecessary by the building of railways and should be abandoned, and that Fort Griffin, being left far to the rear of the frontier, was abandoned in May of that year.<sup>393</sup>

<sup>391</sup> *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, IV, *Transportation*, 307.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, *Statistics of Agriculture*, III, 127, 133.

<sup>393</sup> *Annual Report of Department of Texas, 1881*, file no. 5984, MS., Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington. The abandonment of some of the other posts were as follows: Fort Bascom, 1870; Fort Quitman, January 5, 1877; Fort Richardson,

Another instance of the rapid disappearance of the frontier is observed in the plans for the establishment of new posts on the new frontier. As early as 1878 the Texas congressmen in Washington were asked to use their influence to bring about the establishment of new posts far to the west of some of the old ones. It was maintained by the Texas ranchmen that this was necessary for the protection of the growing cattle industry. In compliance with this request, the congressmen addressed a joint letter to the Secretary of War recommending certain precautions for the Texas border, among these being the establishment of a military post at some point between Fort Sill, Indian Territory, and Fort Concho, Texas. In substantiation of their position they said in part:

In addition to this, during the fall and winter months, for the last three years, there has been a body of from 500 to 1500 buffalo hunters scattered from the Canadian to Fort Concho. These hunters have been a formidable barrier to Indian incursions. This winter, owing to the mild weather, the buffalo have not visited that region in their usual numbers, hence the hunters are returning to their homes, and but few of the State troops are left, so that the portion of the border referred to is left almost unprotected.<sup>394</sup>

May 22, 1878; Fort Larned, July 13, 1878; Fort Dodge, October 2, 1882; Fort McKavett, June 29, 1883; Fort Stockton, June 27, 1886; Fort Concho, June 20, 1889; Fort Davis, June 30, 1891; Camp Supply, February 25, 1895; and Fort Stanton, August 17, 1896. Other posts remaining in the Southwest were useful in protecting the railways or holding the Indians in check, and were therefore not abandoned.

<sup>394</sup> Messrs. Coke, Culberson, Maxey, Throckmorton, Reagan and Gidding to Geo. W. McCreary, Secretary of War, MS., file no. 1797, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



The Secretary of War referred the request of the congressmen to General Sheridan for recommendation who advised that congress appropriate \$60,000 for such a purpose. In respect to the advice of General Sheridan the Secretary of War addressed a letter to the Speaker of the House, on April 3, 1878, asking for the passage of a bill providing for such an appropriation, stating that Fort Griffin should be maintained until the establishment of a new post farther west in the neighborhood of the Double Mountains.

A bill, H. R. 4057, was introduced at the Second Session of the Forty-fifth Congress, making an appropriation for the establishment of two military posts in Texas, one on the Pease River and one at or near the Double Mountains on the Double Mountain fork of the Brazos, and on May 19, 1878, the Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, after a consultation with the military authorities, and with Texas congressmen, agreed to ask for an appropriation for one post and desired that the Secretary of War should locate the same so that the bill might be amended accordingly.<sup>395</sup> Contention arose between the military authorities, congressmen, and the Secretary of War as to where the new posts should be located, and so long and drawn out were their negotiations that before the posts could be provided for, the advanc-

<sup>395</sup> Report of the Adjutant-general to Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, file no. 2653, Old Records Section, A.G.O., War Department, Washington.



ing wave of settlements made it evident to all that such posts were unnecessary, and that the building of them would clearly be a waste of funds. Thus, before the need could be met, the disappearance of the frontier had made the additional military safeguards unnecessary, and they were never constructed.

The period from 1865 to 1881 was distinctively a frontier epoch. During this period of time the erasing of the frontier was brought about by the settlement of the Indian troubles, the slaughter of the buffaloes, the building of the railways, and the occupation of the country by the cattlemen and home seekers. The rapid development of the frontier of the Southwest followed the disappearance of the army posts. Thousands of eager settlers hastened into this vast region and claimed it for their own; beautiful homes and well cultivated fields soon took the place of lonely ranches and far flung ranges; bustling towns with a network of railways and fine roads now take the place of the grim frontier posts and their dim paths and military trails; and the region which was once the hunting grounds of the nomadic red men now supports one of the most prosperous centers of Anglo-Saxon civilization to be found in the United States.



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In the division of the Old Records Section located at the State, War and Navy Building are filed a great amount of manuscript materials. Here are found *Post Returns*, annual reports of departmental commanders, itineraries and journals of expeditions and various other valuable documents. Some of these materials useful in the study of the Southwest are as follows: annual reports of the Military Department of Texas, 1858-1883; annual reports of the Military Department of the Missouri, 1868-1883; *Post Returns* of federal posts mentioned in this volume; *Expedition in the Fifth Military District*, file no. 166-C-63; *Colored Troops - Texas*, file no. 395-T-70; *Sale of Arms*



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